WEBSPINNER BOX 1573
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Webspinner
April 1984

$1.00 Calgary Edition Vol. 1 No. 7

HANDLE GENTLY

WOMEN . . .

By Joanne Gill

. . . IN TRANSITION

Letters

Dear Webspinner
Please accept my cheque for $20. I would like to buy subscriptions for two sisters. Please send them the February issue, it is the best one yet and has inspired me to do this.

Laurie Blakeno

Dear Webspinner
I would like to subscribe to Webspinner for a birthday gift for my girlfriend Barb. What a great gift idea! Thank you.

Marie Remillard

Dear Webspinner
Here's $10--small price to pay. Sure do need support and network right now. Some of us up here are starting to organize. Don't have much time (fulltime student and work as well). But it's happening, slow but sure.
Looking forward to hearing from you.

Laurie Jensen
Grande Prairie

Dear Webspinner
I first discovered your publication at the conference Working Women, sponsored by Calgary Working Women and the IWD Committee. Upon reading Vol 1 No. 2 I was impressed and promptly sent you my request for a subscription. Yesterday I was delighted to secure some back issues of your publication.
After reading the article on the Calgary Women's Summer Festival in Vol 1 No. 4 however, I'm disappointed and disgusted.
Very simply, I consider the article on the festival demeaning and dishonest: demeaning to those who worked hard to see the festival through, and dishonest in its presentation of the facts. The underlying theme of the article is a condemnation of one woman's efforts--namely, festival co-ordinator Robin Slater.
While the article contained some elements of truth, it was, on balance, irresponsible. Ms. Georg started with the assumption that the festival was unsuccessful; she then sought out people who agreed with that idea, and presented their views as an accurate picture of what happened.
No responsible writer would base so much of her case on people who aren't willing to be identified. It is ridiculous to suggest that printing their names would somehow weaken the women's movement.
An honest difference of opinion among people who identify themselves is, I think, acceptable. It is not acceptable to expect readers to put credibility in the views of people who won't let their names stand.
If you expect readers to believe your sources, you'd better give us some names. Anne Georg refers to "many" people she apparently identified. How many are many? 3? 8? 26?

PAIN, TRANSITION, HEALING

Journal of a process

For the theme of this issue of Webspinner we chose the stages of growth: Ouch, Transition, and Healing. This process seemed to fit the material we had available as well as our own experiences.
To differentiate between the stages we have used different type for the headings. The progression is from heavy type for the hurting section through medium for the transition to light for the healing section, visually reflecting the steps represented here.

While weaving this Webspinner, each of us has experienced these elements of growth. It is our hope that you will feel the strength in our pages and join us in our endeavor so that all women may benefit.

Do these "many" represent a cross-section of organizers and attendees or are they someone's friends? How were the interview questions slanted?
We see a good example of slanted journalism in Ms. Georg's statment that Maud Vant "refused to say anything negative", implying that Maud in fact should have been negative, or could be expected to be negative. Once again we get the picture of a writer grasping for ways to fill in the dark picture she wishes to paint.
Some credit is due to Lynn Fraser for at least allowing her name to be used--I admire women like that. However, Lynn's views seem to merit a lot of space in this article, considering that she wasn't even involved in the festival! Lynn should know full well that the festival was for all women, not just lesbians, and if she wants support for the Calgary homosexual community she'd better get her facts straight before condemning the efforts of others.
If Ann Georg really believes that the festival's shortcomings can be laid at the feet of Robin Slater, she obviously holds a lowly view of Calgary women--that is, that we would stand back and allow one individual to jeopardize the women's movement through a festival involving hundreds of people.
What Ann Georg overlooked is that for every woman who took the easy way out and quit or boycotted the festival, there were many more of us who stayed on and kept plugging away until the last bit of garbage was picked up. I wasn't interviewed by Ann Georg and neither were the numerous others who organized, participated in or attended the festival.
In contrast to Lynn Fraser and her shy friends, I'd be happy to provide the names of several people willing to be quoted on their views of the festival.
I'm wondering, Webspinner, how you'll treat the next workshop, conference or festival. Will you again allow a few threatened, jealous people to publicly discredit and condemn the organizers?
Believe me, the weakness in our movement comes from the quitters, the critics and the dropouts. The strength comes from women who share of themselves and take risks--even when things are not going smoothly and success is not assured.

Vikki Menze
Calgary

Val's Flowers
Flowers & Plants for all occasions
Val Walker
proprietor
739-11 Ave. S.W. 269-2454

WOMEN'S SERVICE DIRECTORY

This space is to be a classified section advertising the services of women in tradional and non-traditional occupations. The services will be listed at no charge to the advertiser, and through this directory, we can support women's efforts in areas where women are a minority. As Gloria Steinem has written, "Women's conviction that power has to be earned (especially by women) leads to an emphasis on individual excellence, knowledge and learning." Considering our training to look to men for expertise and authority, it's a victory that we now empower each other as professionals by seeking out women physicians, ministers, plumbers, electricians, carpenters, stock analysts, home improvement contractors, etc. "We're not lowering our standards," said a Houston woman when challenged on her group's choice of a woman architect. "We may be raising them. Statistically speaking, women professionals had to be better to get where they are." And it's free!

ISN'T IT SAD . . .

New Bedford rape

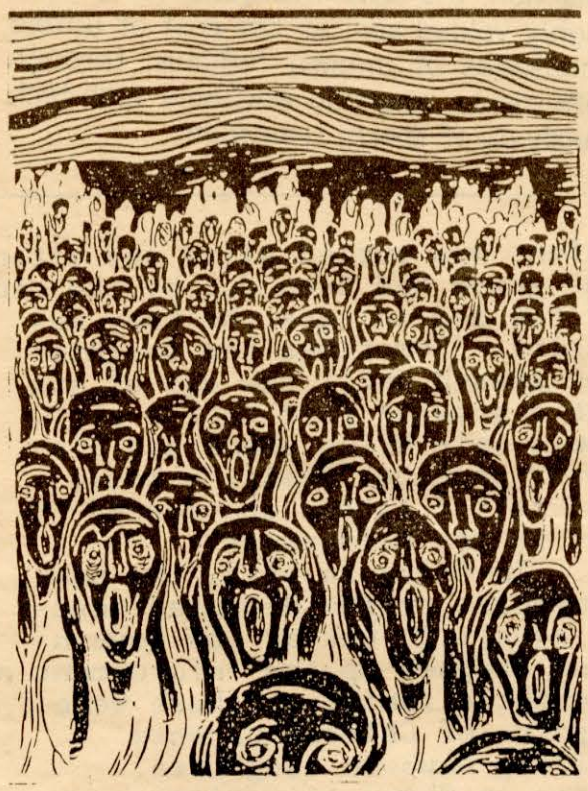
By Pamela Perdue

The bitterness engendered by the gang rape of a 21-year-old mother in New Bedford, Mass. last year will last for some time in the mostly Portuguese-American fishing town. Portuguese residents claimed the case was tainted by anti-Portuguese feelings, and their anger is intensified by the guilty verdicts. "She had no business being in a bar. She should have been home with her kids instead of destroying men's lives!" one elderly woman outside the courthouse shouted after the second verdict.

Women's groups,which staged their demonstrations last year, charged that the case was a flagrant example of the rape victim being put on trial. Defense attorneys alleged that the woman had consented to have sex with the men, grilled her about her sexual history, her relations with her boyfriend, her drinking habits, her fraudulent receipt of welfare payments (all completely unassociated with the crime!) and accused her of making up the story to win a book contract. The woman not only had to repeat her testimony at both trials, but she had to stand through 17 hours of questioning, and both trials were televised. Several news organizations published her name, in direct violation of standard journalism policy.

Rape counsellors and police officials warned that the blown-up news coverage and harsh questioning has discouraged other rape victims from charging their attackers. "They're afraid their identities will be released, and that just increases the stigma and trauma of rape," says Elizabeth Bennett of the New Bedford Women's Centre's Rape Crisis Project.

The victim's ordeal is far from over. Apparently there are reports of cans being placed in bars to collect money to hire a hit man to kill her. Last week, the victim, who has spent her life in this town, was staying in an undisclosed location while trying to decide where to go next, now that the entire state knows intimate details of her life and the attack. "Isn't it sad," said prosecutor Robert Kane, "that a woman raped through no fault of her own can't live in her own town?"



Feminist Dissidence

Russian women lived better before the revolution than they do now, says exiled Soviet feminist Tatiana Goritcheva. "Prostitution is increasing because many people have no residence permits or places to live," she explains. And "although abortion is permitted there are no contraceptives." Such subtle oppression makes "all of us dissidents," she says.

The founder of a feminist magazine called Almanac, Ms. Goritcheva was expelled from the USSR in 1980 after publicly protesting the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. She now lives in Paris.

-World Press Review-

Filipina market

While the number of Filipina "mail order brides" increases, so do broken marriages and exploitation of these women, reports Eddee Rh. Castro for the Depthnews feature agency of Manila (Jan. 13). "Filipinas have been going to Australia, Germany and Belgium and to London Rome and...Switzerland," Castro writes.

He quotes a study showing that "material consideration emerged as the chief factor influencing decisions to marry a foreigner." Booming marriage brokerage businesses match couples quickly and leave them to sort out cultural differences.

In Germany "some 4,000 Filipinas have reportedly been 'sold' to German partners," Castro continues. Many of these young women land in "not happy wedded homes but in brothels".

-World Press Review-

Israeli repression

By Leslie Wilkins

For three-and-a-half years Israeli authorities have denied permission for Sameeha Khalil, a 60-year-old resident of the West Bank town of El-Bireh, to see her five children living in Amman.

Mrs. Khalil asked "all mothers and all those concerned with human rights" to help her see her children. Her appeal was published in the newsletter of Najda, a California-based organization of women concerned about the Middle East.

Mrs. Khalil, president of the In'ash El-Ursa (Society for the Preservation of the Family) women's society, was placed under town arrest Aug. 7, 1980 and has since been denied permission to travel. She was first denied permission to leave the West Bank in 1979 after being invited to speak in the United States and Canada about conditions of women living in the occupied territories.

Israeli authorities also issued a broad order which forbade all West Bank leaders of women's organizations from speaking publicly on political issues.

Mrs. Khalil said she "tried to obtain permits for my children to visit me, but the authorities once again refused...this effectively means that years may pass without the possibility of seeing my children."

This denial of travel permission and the prohibition against women's leaders speaking out politically are issues of deep concern to all human rights advocates and peace-loving people.

We urge you to write to the Prime Minister of Canada and to your member of Parliament and ask for their help in intervening with the Israeli authorities to facilitate the removal of the travel ban on Mrs. Khalil and the prohibitions on freedom of speech on West Bank women's leaders.

R.H. Pierre Trudeau
Prime Minister of Canada
House of Commons
Rm 311-c
Parliament Hill
Ottawa, Ont.
or
Mr. Eliashiv Ben-Horin
Ambassador of Israel
410 Laurier Ave. W. # 601
Ottawa, Ont.

. . . Oops . . .

Sorry for omitting the credit to Marilyn Guille for her poem on the front page of the February issue.

New/old face to female infanticide

By Pamela Perdue

Ancient Greeks advised women to lie on their right sides after sex. A Hebrew custom suggests placing your bed with the head facing north. A Slavic tradition has the wife pinch her husband during intercourse. Germanic lore says you should place an axe under your mattress. Austrian mi midwives buried placentas under nut trees.

All of these folk remedies are supposed to guarantee the conception of a son. (You'll notice, I hope, the lack of folk methods for conceiving a female child.) All of them sound charming and quaint, but there is a darker side to gender selection: the obsessive quest for a more highly valued son, at the cost of untold thousands of unborn females, through infanticide, abortion and new high-tech methods of sperm treatment.

Female infanticide has been around for centuries. In ancient Greece, girl babies were considered valueless and often put out to die of exposure on an open hillside. Eskimos used to kill newborn girls by leaving them exposed on the ice for the simple reason that a firstborn son brought honor to the family. In early Arabia, the female

"...there is a darker side to gender selection: the obsessive quest for a more highly valued son, at the cost of untold thousands of unborn females, through infanticide, abortion and new high-tech methods of sperm treatment."

infant was buried alive and often the grave had been dug by the side of the bed in case the baby was a girl. Sometimes the daughter was spared until the age of six, but a growing fear that a girl could only bring shame and dishonor upon her family's house led to her father abandoning her in the wilderness.

In China in 1949, the new communist regime promoted sexual equality, but as the government stepped up the enforcement of one-child families, there were reports of Chinese parents killing newborn daughters. Today in China scientists have developed a high-tech method of sex selection. A sample of the chorion, precursor to the placenta, is studied a few weeks into the pregnancy. If the tests indicate that the fetus will not be of the desired gender, ie. male, the fetus is aborted. An ironic note--when doctors at Michael Reese Hospital in the States announced in 1983 that they would be the first in North America to use chorion biopsy, they insisted it would't be used for gender selection.

In January 1984, Israeli doctors announced that they could treat the father's sperm by sperarating sperm containing male chromosomes from those containing female, resulting in an 80 percent male-chromosome solution. Eighteen women have already been impregnated with the solution at this writing.

But the most popular and available method of sex determination is abortion after amniocentesis. Japan was the first country to legallize abortion at the request of the mother, and was soon followed by India, Tunisia, China, France, the USSR and Italy. Amniocentesis, a process of withdrawing amniotic fluid and subjecting it to tests, was originally developed to find out if the fetus had Down's Syndrome. Unfortunately, the tests also indicated the sex of the fetus--I say unfortunately, because it's now used almost exclusively for sex determination. In India, the law permits abortion within the first 20 weeks--that's five months--of conception and

Cont'd. p. 7

Why do women so hate their own?

By Leslie Churchill

Why do women so hate their own? Why are female fetuses systematically aborted? Why does a New Bedford woman direct her anger at the victim of a gang rape, saying that woman is destroying men's lives? Why have my sisters turned away from my word? Why do they mistrust my "radical feminist" friends? Why do so many women dismiss their own feelings and concerns as invalid?

I have no answer. I have some thoughts.

Women have been isolated from each other, not just by the confines of home and family, but to a greater degree by what we all see and hear in music, literature, art and recorded history.

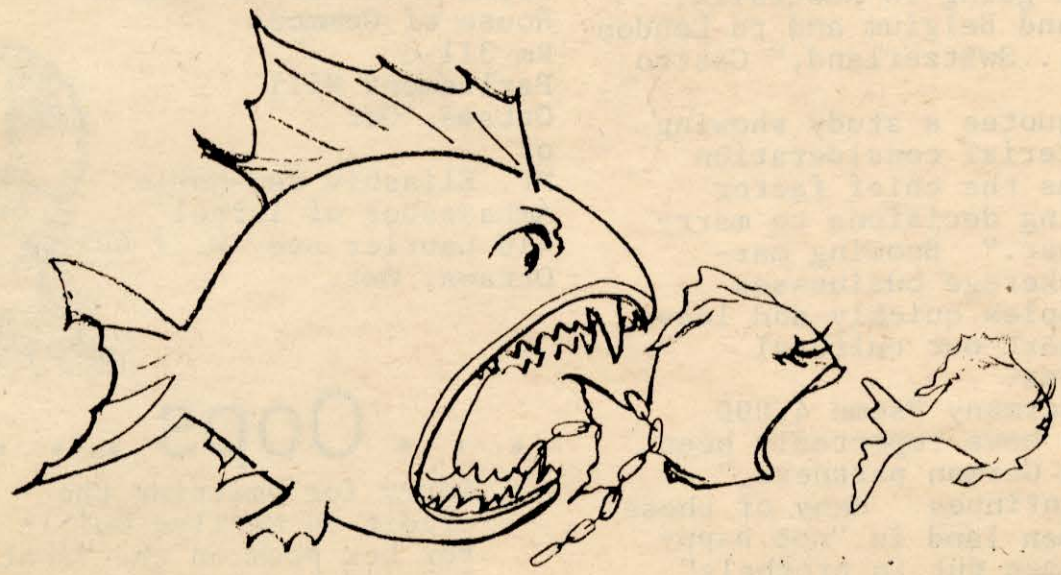
This patriarchal society in which we live tells of and defines values through the eyes of men. It is so inbred that we have looked to men for validation of ourselves.

In societies like those described in the article in this issue about female circumcision, women have been rigidly slotted in roles and their work is expected and unrecognized for its immense importance. Women have been made valueless, indeed a burden.

In our world people try to cope with the ever changing unknown that we call life by defining and holding constants. It's survival.

When our personal security and feelings of selfworth are dependent on the goodwill of our men, it is a very threatening thought that there are these evil temptresses out there waiting to take what we have. Certainly the wish to be loved and wanted is common to us all, but the male fantasized temptress only exists in myth.

Pop songs spread this myth of the evil witch demon. Some lyrics from a song by the Eagles "I've been looking for the daughter of the devil himself" (meaning sexual woman) "I've been searching for an angel in white" (all-forgiving nurturing mother figure). "...Looking for a woman who's a little of both...." A person is a whole--a one--and this fragmentation of a woman's being is a lie.



To separate ourselves from ourselves and to define and file bits and pieces of our essence is damaging. Is it any wonder that some women see little serious value in interacting with other women--being all chopped up ourselves?

In fact, women don't hate each other. We have been devalued and divided; taught to mistrust. Change is the nature of the earth and her life. We have learned the damage and will unlearn it. It is happening. It will continue because our survival depends on it.

Female multilation a repeated trauma

By Leslie Wilkins

This article was originally a paper for my women's studies class. While I was researching it I talked to a lot of women. Most of them thought that circumcision was a terrible problem for "those poor women." But this condescending attitude overlooks the possibility that we are not so different. Through-out our society are numerous examples of ways in which our women are mutilated physically as well as psychologically. We are repressed in more subtle ways but that does not make the damage any less terrible or real. A small example is wearing high heels which cause permanent damage to the feet and spine, as well as making a woman particularly vulnerable by restricting her movement. In spite of this, millions of women subject themselves to this torture in the name of "femininity".

In most Arab countries, almost all of Africa, as well as parts of southeast Asia, a practice persists that dehumanizes women in the most intimate and destructive way. This ritual is called circumcision but is actually the mutilation of the woman's vulva. As a matter of course the female child, usually between the ages of six and eight years, is subjected to the painful, unnecessary and humiliating removal of a part of her body.

There are several operations all considered to be circumcision in various parts of the world. These range from the removal of just the hood of the clitoris (similar to male circumcision) to cutting out all of the inner and outer lips, as well as the clitoris, and stitching the vaginal opening almost completely closed. It is intended that the hole left will be almost as small as a pinhole.

Female circumcision has long been associated with the Moslem religion but is actually pre-Islamic. Mummies have been found in this mutilated condition. The custom, as a part of the culture, passed into the religious practices, and has remained.

The immediate problems inherent in circumcision include urine retention, haemorrage, infection, fever and shock. Problems that usually show up later are low self-esteem, innumerable sexual problems of both psychological and physical nature, menstrual complications, cysts, obstetrical complications, urinary tract infections, chronic pelvic infections, and sterility.

Not only must the female undergo this terrible trauma when she is a child, but frequently it is repeated when she is an adult. A woman may be cut open if she has trouble menstruating, passing urine, on her wedding night, or for delivering her first child. Then she may be resewn for no other reason than because her husband likes her "tight". Widows, divorcees and prostitutes are recircumcised in order to appear virgin-like. All of these operations are done by midwives under unsanitary conditions with all of the resultant complications.

In all of the countries involved, female circumcision is a part of a larger plot to suppress women. In each case the family's honor depends on the chastity of its female members. Girls have actually been killed by their families for supposedly being pregnant when the circumcision is the real culprit. She may be swollen with menstrual blood that she was unable to pass because the opening was made too small. When her family sees that she is not passing blood and is also getting larger, they incorrectly assume that she is pregnant.

It would be easy but unwise for North American women to dismiss this horrible situation as being irrelevant to our own lives. Women all over the world are hurt by female mutilation in these ways:

1) Female mutilation is based on the widely-held belief that female sexuality is inherently evil.

2) This act presupposes that women are incapable of controlling themselves sexually.

3) Circumcision interferes with a woman's right to gain pleasure from sexual relations.

4) Mutilation denies women the right to maintain control over their own bodies.

5) Circumcision is merely an example in the extreme of the universal suppression of women.

Photo by Margaret Bourke-White
Life Magazine © Time Inc., 1972

The United Nations policy at present is to assist any government that wishes help in dealing with this tragic situation. Unfortunately, aid is reserved for those countries who see fit to ask for help. The U.N. does not want to interfere in the internal policies of these countries.

Nawal El Saadawi (The Hidden Face of Eve) of Egypt and Asma El Dareer (Woman, Why Do You Weep?) of Sudan have been actively fighting female mutilation in their countries. Unfortunately it is a very long process to change thousands of years of customs, particularly concerning a "woman's issue". We, as women, must join them in their struggle.

MISS UNIVERSE PAGEANT IN CALGARY

Male-fantasy-defined idea of "beauty"

By Meaghan Dean

As you may have already heard, planning is underway to hold the 1984 Miss Universe Pageant in Calgary. The Alberta Status of Women Action Committee has some strong objections to this and has shared them with other Alberta women's groups through a mail-out.

ASWAC recently mailed an information package out to a variety of women's groups. It contains an article from Robin Morgan's book "Going Too Far" dealing with beauty pageants, ASWAC's four basic position statements on the pageant and some ideas for possible actions groups might want to take around the plan to make Calgary the stage for one of the more high-profile exercises in international sexism.

ASWAC STATEMENTS

1). ASWAC maintains that the entire concept of "beauty" pageants is sexist and utterly contrary to any notion of true equality and acceptance among human beings.

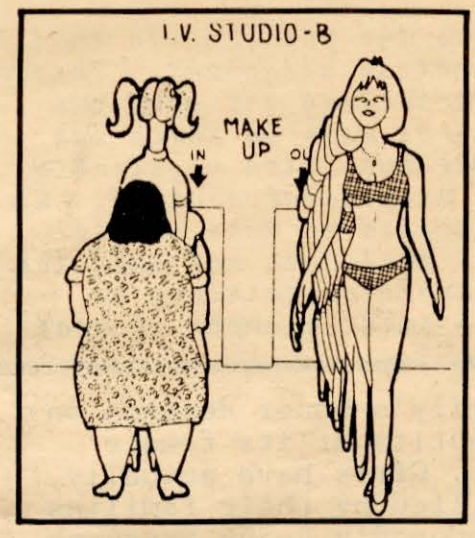
The beauty pageant concept limits and degrades women through the imposition and glorification of a narrow, exploitive, male-fantasy-defined concept of "beauty". Pageants perpetuate and promote the attitude that woman's primary value lies not only with their physical appearance but with a very particular kind of appearance and behavior. They reinforce the idea of woman as object, thereby feeding society's generally sexist assumptions and the violence towards women that stems from them. Beauty pageants (both the concept and the practice) are detrimental to the health of women as whole, autonomous human beings.

2). ASWAC opposes any plan to hold the 1984 Miss Universe Pageant in Calgary.

The Miss Universe Pageant is a high-profile event which presumes to make a statement about women on a global scale. This statement is sexist and unrealistic. The facade created by the Miss Universe Pageant in no way represents the realities of what women are and do in the real world. To host such an event is to be complicit in misrepresenting the nature, accomplishments and realities of at least half the world's population.

3). ASWAC extends its support and solidarity to the women who are contestants in the Miss Universe Pageant.

The Miss Universe Pageant is but one form of institutionalized violence committed against all women every day



throughout the world. The women who are contestants are being victimized by a sexist system. We refuse to be drawn into playing blame-the-victim, which serves only to divide women and cloud the real issue, namely, the essential sexism and violence of the pageant concept. As women living in a sexist society we all have more in common with beauty pageant contestants than we have differences.

4). We urge the city council and citizens of Calgary to refuse to host the 1984 Miss Universe Pageant.

Refusing to host such an event would give Calgary the distinction of setting an international example as a city that does not support any attitude or event contributing to the false portrayal of women. Such a move would be a far more honest and non-violent tribute to women and true beauty.

POSSIBLE ACTIONS AROUND THE MISS UNIVERSE ISSUE

- Letters of Protest
  - esp. Calgary mayor and city council
  - -Calgary Chamber of Commerce
- Letters to Editors
  - -esp. Calgary Herald
  - -Edmonton Journal
  - -local/community papers
- Leaflets/Demonstrations
  - -at city hall/chamber of commerce office during planning phase for pageant (immediate)
  - -if pageant goes ahead, before and/or during*

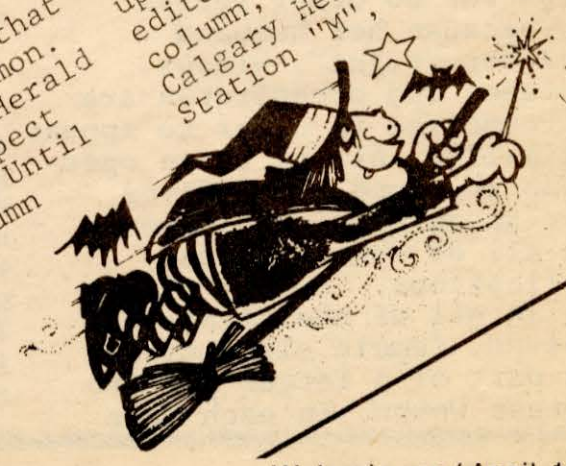
* In keeping with the idea of protesting the pageant concept and not the pageant contestants, try to avoid slogans/statements/actions ridiculing or focusing our concerns on the women who are contestants.

- Press Releases
  - -Calgary and/or other local media
  - -feminist media, i.e. group newsletters, Webspinner (Alta. feminist newspaper)
- Group Discussion
  - -encourage discussion of the whole pageant concept and how it affects women
  - -within your own group, with other women /women's groups in your community
  - -find out what women really think and feel about beauty pageants
- Reclaiming The Word "Beauty"
  - -take on a project aimed at flooding Calgary with images of truly strong, beautiful women
  - -during and/or before the pageant
  - -a great healing process as we take back the power and define what is beautiful for us

Beware those media images

By Pamela Perdue

There's been a lot of "feminist baiting" lately in the press now that the Miss Universe Pageant is definitely coming to Calgary on July 9. Ed Whalen, a columnist for the Calgary Sun, ran a piece last month that said, "Isn't it ironic that the radical feminists who oppose the pageant happen to be real clockstoppers themselves?" If you know the Calgary Sun, you'll realize that this sort of sniping is common. However, the Calgary Herald was the last place I'd expect this gratuitous sexism. Until I read Roy Farron's column last week. He states, "Apparently the militant feminists think beauty contests are a threat to their freedom. They would prefer to look like men. And many of them do." He continues, "I just fail to understand why it is an insult for a man (sic) to admire a pretty girl (sic). In most parts of the world outside "matriarch" (matriarchy???) it is a compliment". If you, as I did, take offense to this column, speak up. Write to The Herald editor who approves Farron's column, Peter Taylor, at The Calgary Herald, Box 2400, Station "M", Calgary,



Lesbian mother leaves lover to satisfy court

A lesbian mother living in Vancouver was forced by the loss of a court battle last month to leave her home with her lover and rent an apartment before she could regain custody of her three children. The B.C. Supreme Court justice, Alan Macdonell, reversed the decision when the mother removed herself from the relationship, at least physically, and also because the children presented the court with sworn affidavits stating that not only did they wish to remain with their mother, but that they were aware of her lesbian relationship. "It's a much better relationship than my mom had with my father," said her 15-year-old son. "It would break her heart to be separated from my four-year-old sister." The woman lived with her lover and children in a government-approved foster home. Ministry of Human Resources staff were aware of the woman's relationship and described it as "discreet".

Photo by Brenda Hemsing

Take back the power - -

SUBSCRIBE TO WEBSPINNER

Infanticide saga cont'd.

hundreds of women in 1982 flocked to private clinics specializing in aborting female fetuses. Some advertised their prices in the local newspapers--$20 to $50. In August 1982, women's groups across India organized protests against the use of amniocentesis for gender selection. The practise was banned when Prime Minister Indira Gandhi stepped in but the debates continue. Indian gyneacologists argue that couples can use it to have a much-desired son, "without having a lot of unnecessary children first."

Doctors on the other side of the issue state that the obsession for a male child is frustrating family planning and that abortion primarily for gender selection is morally unjustifiable.

Boys are more valued in India for many reasons. Only a son or male relative can perform the last rites for a dying parent; only boys can inherit agricultural land and therefore support their families; fathers of daughters who marry are forced to make large dowry payments to the groom's family. But this does not explain the misuse of abortion in other countries. Why do women so hate their own? Why do we have statistics like the following:

-according to a study published in Medical World News in December 1975, of almost 100 pregnant women recently tested and told the sex of their unborn child, a female fetus was detected in 46. Twenty-nine of these women elected to abort. Of 53 women found to be carrying male fetuses, only one chose abortion. The final tally showed 69 children survived; of these only 17 were female.

-sociologist Ravenna Helson states that her study shows that 81 per cent of the women and 94 per cent of the men she surveyed prefer to have a firstborn son, and that many North American parents end their child-producing if the first child is male.

What can the results of such widespread sex selection be? We have no instances of an unbalanced gender ratio in the past to help us predict the social consequences, except for a few isolated post-war incidences in which the women outnumbered the men. In those cases, the results were that women were needed in traditionally male jobs and were given more opportunities in general. Would the opposite be true if men outnumbered women 20 years from now? Some feminists forecast a future with increased prostitution, rape, sexually transmitted diseases and polyandry (in which a woman has more than one husband). One can also foresee women becoming a scarce and valuable commodity, bought and sold, without legal status. Women will become a visible minority.

The world is hurting . . .

By Julie Walker

It would seem that both the government and corporate methods of dealing with our economic recession are unnecssarily harmful to the general population. For example: The University of Calgary(and perhaps other universities) are in danger of losing facilities and courses due to funding cutbacks.

Access to education is becoming more and more difficult and the numbers of people that are being unemployed, in order to save money, increases.

Yet, while these "cutbacks" are being made, economic problems due to world population increase. Over exploitation of resources, over consumption,poor planning, increased taxes and less money to spend and the excessive development of the boom that we can no longer afford to maintain, have all hit us hard.

And yet, money is being spent on: New developments in health technology,(ie keeping weak, diseased and victims of natural death alive for years and years), the computer revolution,(which many in our society cannot afford or do not understand) and, of course, Nuclear Arms.

While this money is being spent, the population of today suffers. Reagan is leading the Western world to war. Our society is being computerized at a rate (disproportionate to human adjustment) that is far ahead of society's emotional and spiritual advancements and financial capabilities.

Single parents hit first with financial cutbacks

By Julie M. Walker

Single parents. These are the people, women, who live alone, raise children and often find they need to continue their life (whether by working or studying) outside the home, rather than relying on welfare to support their needs.

Both handicapped people and single parents have valid contributions to make in our society. And it is they (due to circumstances most students are not faced with) that need the support of funding(the maintenance grant program) in order to develop the skills to return to the work force.

The money that a single parent earns, circulates back into our consumer oriented society, directly in the form of food, clothing, education and recreation for themselves and their children.

Therefore the reasons for the decisions of the Student Finance Board to impose new restrictions on eligibility for the maintenance grant seem to be, to say the least, unfounded and unjustified.

A letter was sent to Calgary students in late July, that stated:"1. You must be a full-time student and maintain a full course load (i.e. five subjects per semester at the university level. 2. When submitting subsequent applications for financial assistance, you should make arrangements to have an academic transcript forwarded to our office reflecting all grades attained while receiving assistance from the Student Finance Board (SFB). 3. Maintenance grants will not be issued to a student attending a Spring and/or Summer session(s) unless the student is reducing the overall length of their program."

However there has been some questions as to whether the letter is actual policy or future policy. In a Gauntlet article (Wed. Oct. 16, 1983) Bryce Bell is quoted as saying "Nobody's aid will be cut off during the current year,..." suggests that it is possible future policy.

Because of the date the letter was sent(July 19) many students enrolled in whatever courses were available in order to comply with the requisite of the grant.

The program services director for SFB, Bryce Bell said that the board is thinking of tightening up government grants and loans to students generally.

However Bryce also pinpointed single parents as a target, saying,"we have reason to believe more and more single parents are taking less than the full load and risk an increase in debt because they are failing courses and remain in school in order to receive financial aid. The debt load increases with the length of time spent in university."

The result of these restrictions for single parents is to either take on a part-time job, spend less time with her children, or quit school and hope to find a job that requires whatever skills the single parent has.

Marion Gauzer, a 29-year-old student with two children, says she often is forced to study through the night and her children start to develop stress-related physical ailments." Not to mention the strain on herself and her relationship with her children.

The fact that most single parents are women and they are the first group hit with financial aid restrictions, suggests that they are expendable not only in the workforce, but in the educational system as well.

These women are pushed back into the same situations they are trying to escape - low income, welfare, no skills, high rents, and "second-best" for their families.

Their voice of protest has not gone unheard. Letters to the Student Finance Board, Peter Lougheed and others have been sent and the fact that these women are not lying back to allow the restrictions to pass over their heads is somewhat of a surprise to the SFB administrators.

Some thoughts . . .

Marilyn Monroe

By Alda

Her death was a feminine tragedy. Her life was frightening to women simply because she was so familiar to us - she sums up all the contradictions of a particular feminine stereotype. She reminds us of the death wish hidden in our narcissism - the dark side of ultra-femininity. In public, Marilyn was everything we're told we want to be; privately she was everything we fear we probably are.

Sexism in Art History

ART HISTORY 421 - AN INDIRECT STUDY OF THE LIBIDO OF A PROFESSOR

By Janice

Sex in the classroom - how common. It's certainly not totally new to me but it was still surprising to discover when I enrolled as a part-time student at the University of Calgary to finish what I had previously started.

Let me tell my story that begins five years ago. During both first and second years of studies, I came across professors (always male) who delighted in focusing, under the guise of higher education, on the sexual aspects of women. Although sex was not relevant to the course material to be covered, these professors always seemed to connect sexual matters and the analysis of women to their lecture content. In each case, the course was literature which of course can and does contain sexual references as well as fantasized conceptions of women (the writers were again normally male). Throughout these two years, I forced myself (for the sake of obtaining marks and eventually a degree) to listen to these men label, condemn, elevate and ridicule the opposite sex. What was most alarming was that these professors seemed to really believe that what they were saying was the truth, written in granite, no less.

The most alarming lectures of course, went back to Adam and Eve themes which have been symbolically portrayed by many writers in many literary genres. To actually believe, though, that all or even some women were vixens and whores was too much!

I didn't speak out in class, but I wrote a review of a record that coincidentally came out at the same time. The record was called Eve and based on biblical events except with a slightly different twist. Eve, after many listenings, focused on Adam just as much if not more than Eve, in its modern-day scenarios of relationships. That was exactly what I needed, knowing that this particular professor read the student newspaper. I had tapped into his bias and his holier-than-thou attitude was very apparent when I went to my next class (after the paper was published.

Well, now it's 1984, and Goerge Orwell told us it wasn't going to be a picnic. And he's right.

I am currently studying

Christine Workman

the history or photography. I, of course, had some expectations. I thought we would study the invention of this medium and trace its development by looking at the key photographers instrumental in its growth.

Well, in part we have done this. What I hadn't bargained for, nor paid my money for, was a dialogue about sex, pornography, homosexuality and pedophile thrown in for good measure. For the most part these sexual topics in our lectures were related to photographers who played a minor role in the development of this art and who did not offer much content worth studying.

The one photographer who did contribute was Muybridge and all we heard in one lecture was about the proceedings of his trial for murder due to infidelity on the part of his wife.

Fine, this event interrupted his progress. His contributions didn't stop there. But why did we spend another lecture (remember, this class is for three hours, one evening a week) on Lewis Carroll who had a predilection for little girls (perhaps a closet pedophile who sublimated these drives into his writing). His photographs really had no impact on photography except for the possibilty that they now look like the forerunners of child pornography. (Lewis Carroll's fascination with young girls has been widely studied in literature by academics who are perhaps looking incredibly hard for something "relevant" to say).

Why did he spend at least half an hour reading an essay on female sexuality from one of his favorite magazines? Why did he laugh so hard when he read the article's conclusion that emphatically stated that Freud and his studies have helped to unscrew women, when we know that most members of that profession have turned their backs on Freud's teaching.

Why did he lecture on what he labelled two minor photographers, who among other things, loved to photograph nude women? The only problem was that these photographs progressed from erotica to increasingly violent depictions of women. This series began with some black and white studies of the female body. Then, the slides turned to late '50's pinup "girls". Then we progressed to a slide of a woman with one of her breasts placed in a meat grinder. We also saw a slide of a woman carressing her breasts. Her fingers had sharp, talon-like, metal claws attached to them. They looked like they could easily puncture skin and rip it open without effort.

I was more subdued in class this time. But I felt good because I said to all of them, including the professor (who appeared somewhat harried at the end of the previous class) that I wasn't going to sit back anymore and let someone degrade me. I wasn't going to be silent while he abused his power that was probably earned on his merit, but largely earned because he was fortunate enough to be a man and not a woman in a patriarchal society.

Sexism in Art History

Despite burning peace camp vows to stay

"The womyn's peace camp is going to be here...until they get rid of all the cruise missiles, because that's what we're all about."

This vow to stay and continue the peace vigil outside the USAF airbase at Greenham Common, England was re-affirmed recently despite a pre-dawn police raid and destruction of the peace camp.

On April 2 police evicted womyn from the peace encampment just before dawn and arrested 30 womyn in the raid.

Police set fire to the womyn's benders, many of them still containing their personal belongings. By mid-morning bulldozers had levelled the area.

The Womyn's peace camp at Greenham started in December 1981 and while evictions and destruction of the benders has been carried out since on nearly a weekly basis, they have not involved the arrests and destruction of personal property that occurred in the April 2 raid.

There are indications the raid was in line with the increasing violence aimed at the womyn in recent months by police and military (see below).

Since cruise missiles have arrived at Greenham Common USAF airbase and the Womyn's demo on Dec. 11th, 1983, the number of disturbing incidents and cases of verbal abuse have risen considerably.
The womyn are subject to continued harassment and verbal abuse, especially at night. Powerful torch-beams are flashed upon and around the benders in which the womyn sleep.

There are many incidents of stone-throwing, shouting, swearing, piercing benders with metal fencing-spikes, threats of rape, etc. These incidents are committed by the troops inside the perimeter fence. They occur nearly every night at intervals and vary in length of duration so that sleep becomes almost impossible for the Womyn.

Many Womyn feel that this continual harassment is a positive invitation by the troops for the Womyn to retaliate in Kind. Fortunately, this violent form of retaliation has not taken place as far as can be ascertained.

Womyn try to communicate with the soldiers. As soon as any of them show any sign that they are even willing to listen, other soldiers will ridicule them and accuse them of supporting the Womyn.

A verbal report has been obtained from the Womyn at all the gates around the perimeter fence. They all feel that the facts contained in this report should be made accessible to the public and are willing to testify that all that is written here is absolutely true.

Orange Gate (Crookham Common)

Jan. 3, 11:30 p.m.-12 midnight - The Womyn in a bender were sleeping. Their bender was situated on a grass verge very close to the fence. After a great deal of verbal abuse, flashing of powerful torches into benders and stone-throwing, all of which raised no response from the Womyn, a metal fencing-stake, weighing 13½ lbs. and 5½ ft. in length and with a sharp pointed end, was thrust through the bender. Three attempts were made, each of which pierced the plastic covering. At the fourth attempt the stake pierced the plastic, then the lining blanket and landed amongst the Womyn, one of whom was struck on the arm. The stake came from inside the perimeter fence and is now in safe keeping with one of the womyn.

Dec. 13-16 - On one of these nights a concrete slab, described as "large", was dropped or thrown on a bender at the end of the row. A metal fencing-stake was thrust at the bender eight times and pierced the plastic sheeting on each occasion. The Womyn thought the soldiers could have been drinking, due to remarks they heard, ie. "go get us another bottle then".

Next day a complaint was made to a police inspector inside the base. He expressed concern over the incident. After an inspection of the bender and the concrete slab, the harassment and abuse lessened for a few nights. The slab is in safe-keeping.

Threats of rape, burning, bodily disfiguration, stone-throwing occur at the gate approximately two out of every three nights. Verbal abuse is abundant and at night. Noises to indicate the latter were supplied by groaning and balloons and lasted approximately two hours.

Cont'd. p. 11

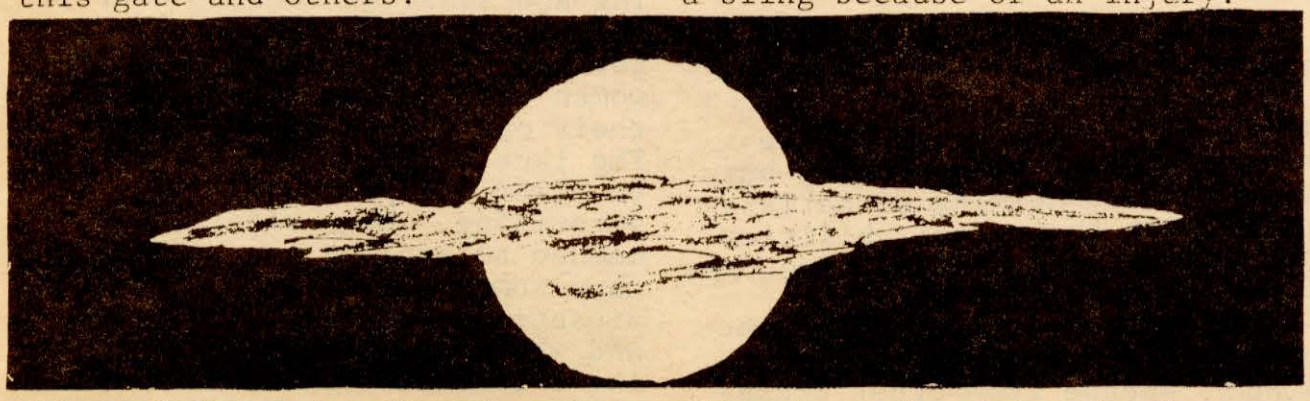
Harassment at Greenham Common

Cont'd. from p. 10

A large fire-cracker was thrown at Nikki's bender and exploded a few feet from her face on New Year's Eve (10 p.m.)

Jan. 4 - Lyz and Marian were walking along the permiter fence in broad daylight. "We were spat upon by soldiers and as we approached a muddy and wet area a soldier stood on the bank above us and threw stones into the water from his side of the fence. As we passed we were showered with mud. When asked if he was pleased with his actions, he replied that "nothing had ever given him greater satisfaction in the whole of his life".

The following examples of verbal abuse have occurred not once but many, many times at this gate and others.



(There follows details of verbal abuse of which I shall give only one example, since it's all similarly disgusting). "I'll bet they're sucking each other off in there."

After one stone-throwing incident, Sian tried to talk to the soldiers who were doing the stone-throwing. "I told them that we could resort to their methods and throw stones at them, but we chose to keep the peace in a non-violent and peaceful way.

Red Gate

This camp is situated away from the perimeter fence on the opposite side of the road. Stone Stones have been thrown at the Womyn right across the road. In the morning they receive remarks like, "Wake up you fucking whores. You're a waste of good meat". One womyn remarked that "all the insults seem to be directed at us because we are womyn.

Violet Gate

During the Christmas period mud was smeared over tooth-brushes and other personal belongings which were left near the fence, and on one occasion troops approached the benders on the outside of the fence and said, "Shall we rape these womyn?" Other verbal abuse includes the phrases such as "Anybody who wants to fuck you must be too lazy to wank".

Blue Gate

On the night of Jan. 5 our teepee caught fire. We ran to the fence and asked the police to phone for the fire brigade. We were told that there was "No need for a fire engine as our boys will deal with it." They came out from the base with fire extinguishers and sprayed the contents of them all over the womyn who were standing nearby and then proceeded to spray as many tents as they could. They only sprayed the fire a little bit and after they had left the fire broke out again. All the time they were laughing.

On Dec. 11 the womyn at the gates received many gifts. A night watch has been essential at this gate because of pilfering by the police. Of the latter, it has been quoted, "They cut all our plastic sheeting down and blankets which were protecting us from the weather. We get up in the morning and it's all down on the ground. Even our tents have been purposely knocked over."

"Chris went into the woods to use the pit and was followed by the police. Her arm was in a sling because of an injury. When she refused to give her name to the police she was knocked over by them and struck."

"A womyn with a young baby sleeping in a tent was told by a soldier to 'take off your knickers because we're around tonight'."

Turquoise Gate

A tent was burned down at this gate which is situated amongst trees and quite a distance from the road. The police suggested that a spark from their fire could have been responsible for the outbreak. As there were no womyn and no fire in the area at the time of the outbreak the possibility that it could have been started delibertately could not be ruled out.

Green Gate

Majijke tells, "Womyn went into the base at night--were arrested and handcuffed together in one line. Comments from police, "Are the ovens hot for when we get back?" and to a French womyn, "Go home foreigner". Also when we got into the base the soldiers surrounded us with barbed wire. They took Leslie off and beat her up. Jud was dragged by her hair. Also, "before Christmas (Dec. 22) Anne Petit, Helen Johns and other womyn were looking at the silos. We did street theatre and M.O.D. police approached to make an arrest. Eight M.O.D. circled us and picked out Anne. I grabbed her and asked on what charge they were arresting her. The reply came, "Er--suspicious behaviour.". We said that was unlawful but they took her in the base anyway. Inside she was charged with criminal damage.

Leslie tells about Babs' bender. "Babs went away for a few days to escape soldiers throwing stones and things at her. I went to check on her bender and found that the police had totally kicked it in. They'd nicked her German passport and I.D. but the wallet was left with money still in it. This was a couple of months back. The next bender we built, not on the same spot, she left for a few days and when she returned she found the polythene slashed, as were her leather trousers and jacket. Her bed had shit in it but her purse was left. The bender was on the path the police used to get to the fence and the tea van. This was two weeks before Christmas. Becky had £70 taken after police went through the benders on the morning of Dec. 11."

Yellow Gate (Main Gate)

Spiky tells, "After Oct. 29 Katrina and I awoke and saw a policeman letting car tires down and bunging up Joan Prear's petrol tank with stones. Two nights back from Monday the M.O.D. started patrolling outside the camp fence and we noticed C.I.D. patrolling in their new Cortinas."

Becky tells of the Little Chef sit-in...The actual arrest was normal and in the cells for the first six hours it was okay.

Then they started not letting womyn out of the bottom cells to go to the toilets. At this point we got cold baked beans, bread and tinned fruit. The end cell threw the food on the wall and that's why the police wouldn't let them or others to the toilets. They had to defacate on paper plates and one womyn was sick because they had a tube of gloss paint with them with which to graffitti the walls. The fumes were toxic. Most of the time the police refused to open the ventilation flaps and with five in each small cell the air was bad. None of us were charged with any offence.

The latest news from the Organe Gate is that soldiers are making siren-like noises with their walkie talkie sets by creating a feedback situation. The womyn say that they will never leave because of harassment. If cruise leaves Greenham the womyn will leave of their own free will...

Please write letters of support to:
Womyns Peace Camp
By Main Gate
Greenham Common Air Base
Nr Newbury
Berkshire, England

ANOREXIA NERVOSA

A caricature of femininity

By Alda

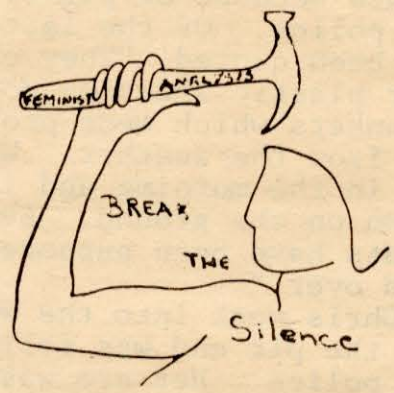
The issue of weight loss is of greatest concern and most avidly pursued by women but the actual weight loss is most often irrelevant to the real source of difficulty. Our body weight has become an index or symbol of our ability to control our lives. It is interesting to consider some of the reasons why weight control should have become such an important metaphor in so many of our lives, where the desire to lose weight becomes a chronic focus of all our effort and worry and ultimately having adverse effects on our well-being and over-all functioning.

Anorexia nervosa is perhaps the most extreme symbol of weight obsession. It would be placed on the outermost end of the "satisfaction with one's body" continuum with the other eating disorders in between. It is a disease of self-starvation. The anorexic has a normal appetite but is determined not to eat, having an aversion to food and to weight gain.

The drive to be thin becomes all-consuming (pun intended) with severe distortions of body image. The desire to achieve this distorted ideal appears to bear little relationship to actual body weight (most anorexics are within 10% of average body weight before the onset of the problem). Anorexics experience success in renouncing food as an immense personal accomplishment.

They often experience an almost exultant sense of power - the visible evidence of accomplishment being an emancipated body. The disorder is a tragic parody of control as the anorexic is controlled by food rather than the reverse.

Our culture places a high value on the end product of thinness - it represents not only beauty but also a disciplined lifestyle.



Probably the most common psychological characteristic of anorexics is not only their conformity to social demands for high achievement, but also an overwhelming dissatisfaction with their real abilities and the feeling that nothing they do is ever good enough.

Achieving control over eating permits, and ultimately demands, escape from other pressures. The literature usually describes the anorexic as sensitive, dependent, introverted, anxious, perfectionistic, and as children they were consciencious, well-behaved, and shy - "good" girls who gave no trouble at school or home and were always eager to please. The anorexic reacts to new social situations with dieting as a way to control some aspect of their behavior. Since these situations usually coincide with increased sex-role pressures (such as puberty or leaving home), the "refuse to eat" response can also be viewed as a reaction to arousal of the underlying conflicts about femininity. Anorexia nervosa reflects an ambivalence about femininity, a rebellion against femininism that in its particular form expresses both a rejection of femininity, the anorexic says "no" to food. This is her way of showing strength yet her thinness expresses her frailty.

Traditional treatment of anorexia nervosa begins with the premise that eating is a symbolically sexual behavior being attributed to underlying preoedipal or oedipal conflicts. Self-starvation is interpreted as fear of oral impregnation whereas the anorexic's periodic gorging is seen as the unconscious desire to become pregnant. The refusal to eat therefore reflects the anorexic's psychological conflicts about being feminine.

A feminist analysis does not argue with this traditional psychoanalytical view that eating disorders express sexual conflicts; the difference lies in the sexual conflicts expressed. Traditionalists emphasize the fear of impregnation and the underlying rejection of femininity, while the feminists emphasize the fear of rejection and the underlying eagerness to be feminine.

While the traditionalists emphasize the origin of this sexual conflict as being unresolved oedipal conflict and a resulting failure with the mother, feminist analysis stresses the socialization process within our culture in which the only meaningful relationships are with men. If one derives a sense of self-worth only from pleasing men, the desperate search for male approval can lead not only to dependency, but also to an overwhelming and fearful passivity, lacking both assertiveness and autonomy, characteristics synonymous with traditional femininity.

Because of the interplay between sense of control over eating and sense of control over self, it might be especially important that anorexics and other women with eating disorders choose their own course of treatment. The lack of treatment techniques to alleviate poor body image is surprising. More research is needed to explore the reasons why many women suffer from chronic dissatisfaction with their bodies and why they make weight and eating a central feature of their lives. Research and life are not separate and divisible but one and the same - feminism offers not a finished structure but a living process; how and why we choose ultra-thinness as our feminine ideal remains a mystery and can only be effectively explored by feminists.

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FEMINIST NUNS

Speaking out with a vengeance

It is Sunday, and in an upper room of Chicago's John Hancock Center, a feminist liturgy is in progress. Twenty-five Roman Catholic women--nuns wives, singles and divorcees--bless each other with water, making the sign of the cross on one another's forehead, kips and heart. Instead of a hymn, there is music from Barbra Streisand's latest movie, "Yentl", about an orthodox Jewish woman who wants to study the Talmud. In the tradition of the Catholic mass, Sister Jacquie Wetherholdt lifts a loaf of sourdough bread and in the name of women priests, past and "yet to come", invites the congregation to "break this bread and share it". Then Sister Donna Quinn holds aloft a goblet of wine--"the chalice filled with the blood of those women who have given birth and are giving birth today"--and offers it to the others. In place of a sermon, the women listen to a taped speech by theologian Rosemary Radford Ruether, who ridicules the Vatican's declaration that only men can be ordained because priests must "image" Jesus. This does not mean "that the priest should look Jewish," Ruether explains. "it means the priest should have balls."

-Newsweek-

Nuns and sisters in Catholic churches are speaking out with a vengeance. The National Assembly of Religious Women and the National Coalition of American Nuns are breaking the silence on what they conisder a moribund, patriarchal insititution. Sisters are unifying with a battery of complaints on everything from sexist language in the Liturgy and unequal compensation between sisters and priests, to the pain of lesbians in religious orders. Only a short time ago very radical steps were taken to jettison cumbersome habits and to make social justice central to their mission. In 1979 Sister Theresa Kane, outgoing president of the Sisters of Mercy Union, startled the world by asking the Pope to his face to consider opening all the church's ministries to women.

"Women religious are the backup troops in the feminist battle," says Sister Marty Kashuba. "There's a feeling that we are church and that we will no longer let the hierarchical system define what is spiritual for us."

Traditionally the orders intended their women to live in the world and remedy some social need through apostolic orders into a quasi-cloistered mold. As this became entrenched, the church "fathers" increased the day-to-day subjugation.

Sister Rita Hofbaurer of the Leadership Conference on Womens Religious says, "We were treated like children. Once a year a priest would take us out to an amusement park where people would photograph us licking ice cream. I refused those invitations."

Nonetheless, these pioneering women managed to build the largest system of women's colleges in the world and to administer an impressive network of hospitals. Today about 10 per cent of sisters pursue secular careers as lawyers, academics, administrators, social activists and even government officials. Most others continue to work for the church and thousands of these women are no longer satisfied with their second class ecclesiastical status and are beginning to speak out.

Several of the larger American orders are weighing the consequences of renouncing their canonical--that is, legal--status in the church and then regrouping as independent congregations of women free to pursue their ministries without Vatican approval.

Sister Janet Peterworth, acting pastor of St. Paul of the Cross parish in Indiana, senses a conflict coming over women's rights in the church and "when the dust settles," she firmly believes, "something new will be born."

Catholic Church and abortion: A historical perspective

By Pamela Perdue

In ancient history, abortion was generally viewed as a woman's private business in which no man had any right to interfere. But with the rise of patriarchal religions, specifically Christianity, came the belief that the father's semen conveyed the soul to the fetus St. Thomas Aquinas asserted that semen and semen alone was the vehicle of the soul. Therefore, abortion was a crime because a part of man was being destroyed.

The Catholic Church disagreed with him in its Doctrine of Passive Conception, which declared that the soul arrives in the fifth month of pregnancy, not before, and up to the fifth month the fetus was soulless. This opinion was law among Catholics until as recently as 1869, when the Church quietly revised its opinion. Pope Pius X announced that the soul was received at conception after all.

The Church now falsely pretends that it has "always" opposed abortion. The Medieval Church was not against abortions as much as opposed to the midwives who performed them. The handbook of the Inquisition noted, "No one does more harm to the Catholic faith than midwives." The Church was not averse to killing the unborn, since it burned alive many pregnant women during this period.

Interestingly, abortion was not classified as a crime in Europe until the 19th Century. The United States first defined abortion as a criminal offense in 1830. Recent opposition to legallized abortion stems from ignorance of how recently it was illegallized and also from male belief that women must be controlled by forcing childbirth on them. The Catholic Church still claims authority over women's reproductive systems. Catholic hospitals will refuse to abort even a fetus conceived by rape.

Women's Resource Centre

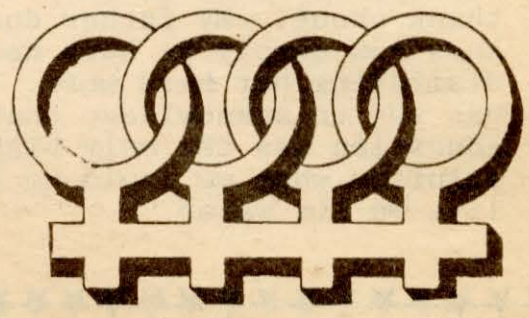
By Alda

The Centre is located on the main floor of the YWCA downtown and is staffed primarily by volunteers who bring with them a wide variety of backgrounds and interests and who are extremely committed to women's issues.

A variety of services are offered by the Centre as well as a vast amount of information available for the browser, or the researcher. The staff also provides a referral service to other community resources and agencies in any area of concern to women.

The Centre is open five days a week, Monday thru Friday from 9:00am - 4:00pm. Drop in to talk or browse, read the bulletin board, or to have a cup of coffee.

The Women's Resource Centre
320 5th Avenue S.E.
Calgary
Phone 263-1550 (Local 397)



Portraits of two mothers . . .

by Janice Michaud

I have grown up reading fairly tales about pure and fair damsels who always had to be rescued by the brave good-hearted knights. For one reason or another, growing up in the baby boom years somehow ensured I would never buy that for my future.

Women, though, from a previous generation, did buy that and its long-term effects have had some major repercussions. It was an easy price to pay, they thought, considering the social climate during their early 20's. My mother found traditional work, married and raised three children. All, if I might add, have turned out to be decent human beings.

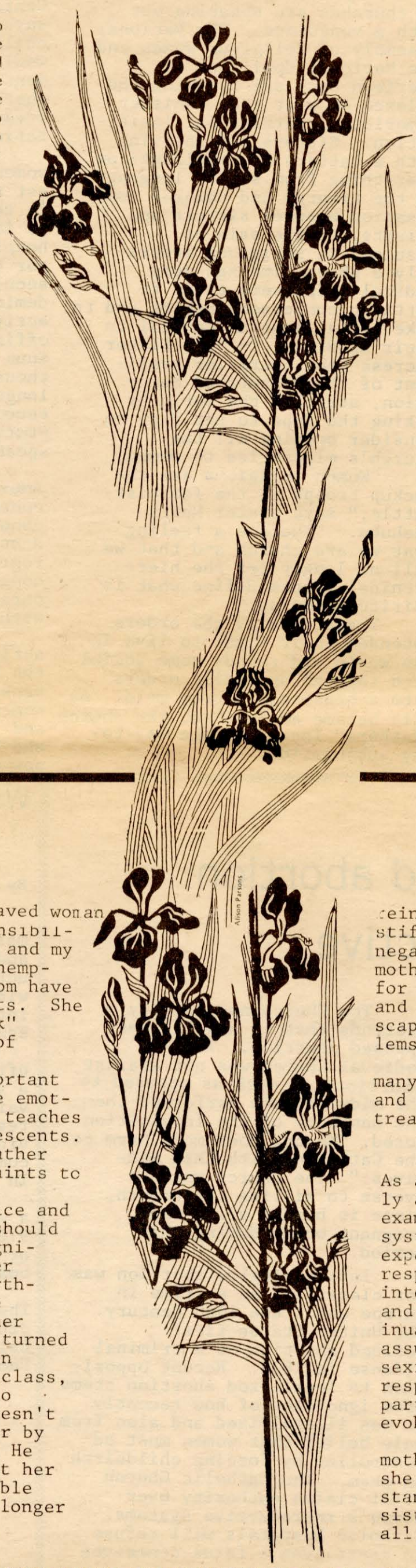
Without going into a lot of painful details, I will explain that the last 10 years have perhaps been the most painful for my mother. Her health has been affected, her marital status is different now, and her financial status has been lowered greatly due to a lot of misadventures from her husband - a typical outcome of the Cinderella Complex whereby women wait forever for their magic prince to carry them off and live happily ever after.

What is so interesting about this is that while her husband is delinquent in his approach to life and his responsibilities, she suffers. He has walked away looking quite clean, and has no responsibilities to her even though he was a negligent husband and provider who wreaked havoc on her emotional and physical being. And, because she finally got so fed up and threw him out for his carnal activities, she can get very little financial help.

Agency lawyers cannot take him to court, they say, because she asked him to leave the house. In essence, they are saying that's too bad that he was unfaithful and very abusive both through physical and mental actions. It's too bad you couldn't live with that because by your "I won't stand for this anymore", the law is on his side.

It's quite unfair, in my mind as well, that he benefitted greatly from my mother who devoted herself to him. She believed in standing behind her man, and she did. His financial status and peer status in the community were enhanced by her efforts and person; her's were not.

I hope this causes ripples somewhere in the system so that change will occur. At the least, I hope someone else understands.



By Elizabeth Dunbar

My mother is an enslaved woman. She alone bears the responsibility for my retired father and my 30-year-old perpetually unemployed brother, both of whom have extravagant spending habits. She does all the "women's work" and is the single source of income.

It is especially important for my mother to have more emotional support because she teaches mentally handicapped adolescents. Often she is told by my father to keep her trivial complaints to herself and that part of women's role is to sacrifice and nurture. He believes she should not expect credit or recognition for what is simply her duty. Her feelings of worthlessness and isolation are deemed unfounded. My father doesn't consider that she turned down graduate studies, even though she was top of her class, because she had a family to think about. My father doesn't know how deeply he hurt her by dismissing her hard work. He has yet to acknowledge that her education was the only viable solution when we could no longer live on his wages.

My father and brother reinforce each other in their stifling views of women. This negates the beautiful person my mother is. My family judges her for finding an escape in alcohol and she is usually the convenient scapegoat for all family problems.

My mother's struggles are many. She is intellectually and emotionally starved and treated like a slave.

As a daughter and more importantly as a woman, I can set an example by developing a support system--making my own rules and expecting to be treated with respect. I live my life interdependently with dignity and freedom. This means continually pointing out that men's assumptions about women are sexist and incorrect. I feel a responsibility to all women, particularly my mother, to evoke what changes I can.

Through my actions my mother is beginning to see that she doesn't need permission to stand up for herself. And the sistership we have begun is for all time.

HE GIRLS FROM THE WORLD NEXT DOOR

anne G.

you in the hospital in 1978
id not like your treatment
ere trying to escape
ey threw you in a room
hey pumped you full of pain
said you were dangerous
said you were insane.

h Michele I'm alot like you
Michele, I'm just like you.

they took away my crucifix
hey took away my clothes
hen they took away my cigarettes
ched them in the nose
ey threw me in a room
they pumped me full of pain
said I was dangerous
said I was insane.

we're just girls from
world next door
on't like this pain
on't like your war
ring you magic from a universal shore
use we're the girls from
world next door.

aming on the ward in the
le of the night
s me schizophrenic, catatonic
paranoid
eedles and electroshock
ulsions into void
when they do those things to me
totally destroyed.

ichele this scares me too
ichele what are we going to do?

I met Mr. Satan
aid "Don't be shy
ll not hurt you
t make you cry
use you've been to hell and
never even died."
aid "You've been to hell and
ve never even died "

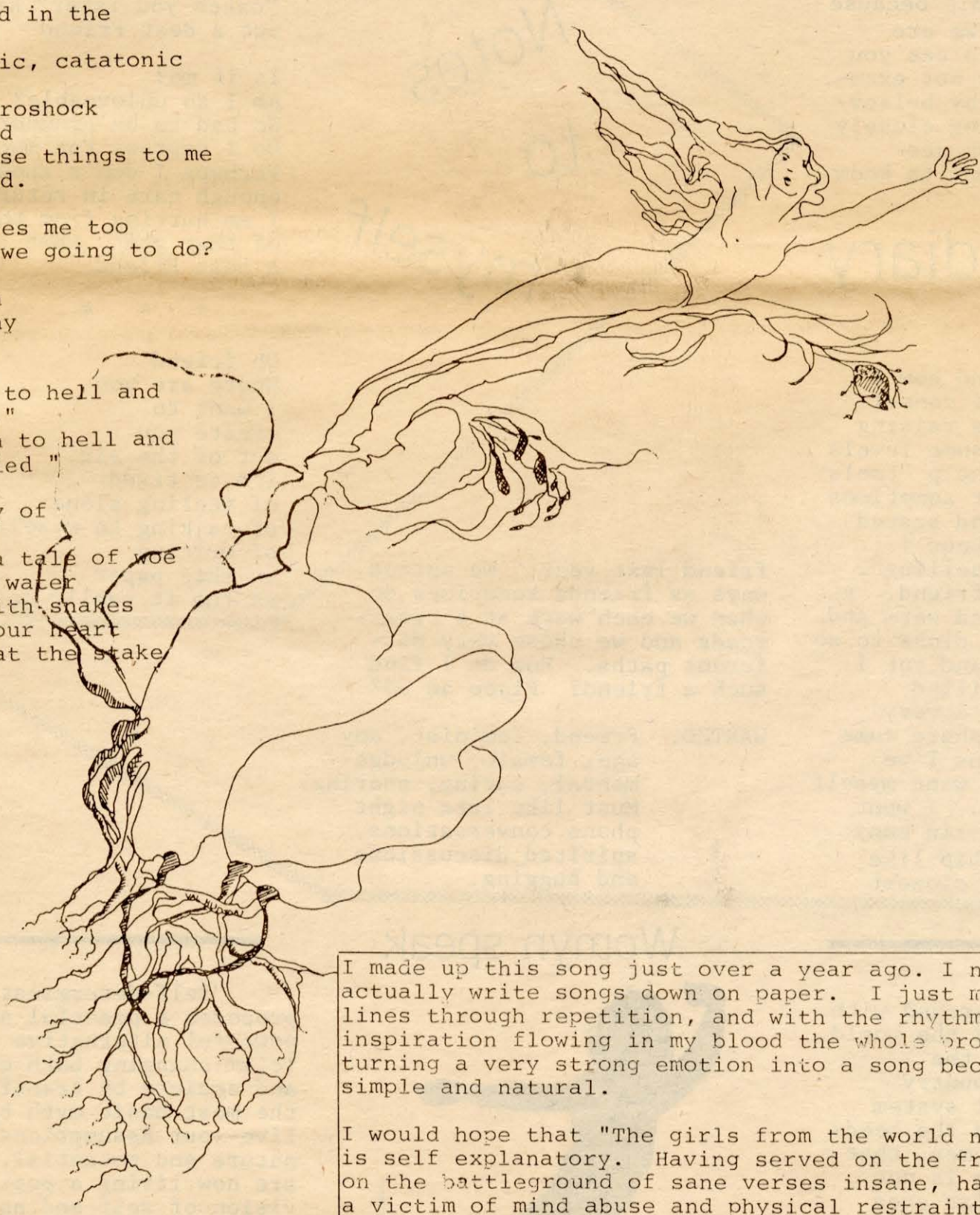
tell your story of
ng time ago
le of sadness, a tale of woe
threw you into water
threw you in with snakes
they cut out your heart
they burnt you at the stake

In the name of God and
In the name of Christ
People who smile
Aren't always very nice
And the evil in my eyes is just the
Evil in your mind
The evil in my eyes is just the
Madness in your mind."

But I said
I'm just a girl from the world next door
And I don't like this pain and
I don't like this war
In the name of God and in the name of Christ
I've been to heaven and I never even died
I flew with the angels and I talked to butterflys
I'm just a girl from the world next door.

Don't be sad Michele if your friends don't talk to you
Because you went crazy and they laugh and point at you
Listen to me now when their lives are at an end
Mr. Satan told me that the joke will be on them
The joke will be on them

We're just girls from the world next door
We bring you love from a universal shore
And we've been to heaven and we never even died
Because we're the girls from the world next door.



I made up this song just over a year ago. I never actually write songs down on paper. I just memorize lines through repetition, and with the rhythm and the inspiration flowing in my blood the whole process of turning a very strong emotion into a song becomes simple and natural.

I would hope that "The girls from the world next door" is self explanatory. Having served on the front lines on the battleground of sane verses insane, having been a victim of mind abuse and physical restraint and having been a person of the female gender throughout, I have somehow managed to survive and heal myself by using my psychotic experiences as a unique and special kind of inspiration. And sometimes I can even convince myself that the trip to hell was worth a glimpse of heaven.

A letter to a friend who's . . .

* * A Letter to a Friend Who's In a Bad Relationship * * *

By Leslie Wilkins

I feel much pain for you that you don't even feel yourself yet. But I think you will eventually. Yes, I know that's a judgment.

I tried being objective about this situation. I certainly can see all the sides. I too have worn the rose-colored glasses. I thought my friens must be blind not to sense the aura around that special someone. All their talk went in one ear and out the other.

I too have been judged. I have on more than one occasion been verbally abused by well-meaning people for some supposed violation of their friend. All those judgmental friends only caused problems for both of us and much pain.

But I can't be objective. I am very much involved even if it isn't my relationship because we are both women and we are friends. It hurts me to see you setting yourself up by not examining contradictions, by believing lies, by not looking closely enough just in case you see something you don't want to know about.

I am torn between wanting to protect you from this destructiveness and wanting to let you learn from your experiences as everyone does. If you are anything like me you won't listen if I criticize your beloved. I risk losing your friendship. I also risk allowing you to suffer more than may be necessary. You were lonely before, and now you aren't. Do I have the right to impose that loneliness on you again when I can offer you little compensation? Please know that whatever happens I'm here for you.

From my diary

By Suzn Morgan

I don't understand how I can have done years of conselling and consciousness raising and be quite okay on some levels --have scads of self-help "tools" at my disposal and yet sometimes still feel so small and scared and disconnected. I know I don't need more "counselling". I really need a best friend. A person to feel safe and warm and connected with. I am close to so many wonderful women and yet I have within me an unfilled space. I really want a very "feminist" friend to share some of the deep connections I've made. In some ways I want myself incarnate as a friend. I want someone to laugh with--in many ways I want a friendship like I had with Louise, my closest friend last year. We parted ways as friends sometimes do when we each were at a crossroads and we chose very different paths. How do I find such a friend? Place an ad?

WANTED: Friend, feminist, any age, female, unjudgemental, caring, sharing. Must like late night phone conversations, spirited discussions and hugging.

FRIENDSHIP . . .

Notes to myself

By Suzn Morgan

I seem to be
devoid of a friend
not just a casual
"catch you later" kind
but a Best Friend

Is it me?
Am I so unloveable?
So bad to be around?
Do I express too much?
Perhaps I don't show
enough care in return?
I am hurting from the lack
of that gift, that connection
a Best Friend.

* * *

Oh friend
Where are you
I want to
create you
out of the air.
I'm so tired
of feeling alone
of talking to myself
of writing
on this paper
as tho it really mattered.

Womyn speak

"We have common ground with our sisters throughout the world. This common ground is the realization that no country has organized a social system which fully recognizes the needs and human rights of women, that the struggle for women is not confined to a particular area of the world or a particular type of economic system, but it common to all women."

--National Action Committee on the Status of Women--

Women, Dover Pictorial Archive Series

"Self-determination proposes a peaceful and powerful alternative to criticism:changing both ourselves and society by transforming the most basic myth by which we live--our assumptions about our nature and potential...Many are now living a positive vision of self and society. We want now to give it vital public visibility. We are developing principles of social action and institutional change based upon a faithful vision of who we are and who we can be."

--Aquarian Conspiracy-

FERRON ISSUES NEW ALBUM

Shadows on a Dime

By Leslie Churchill

I suppose a page filled with "wow" and "yes" would get very hard on the eyes, but that is what springs up in me when I listen to Shadows on a Dime, Ferron's latest album.

Her words amaze and delight and her voice compels. She reaches out and shakes me to the core.

Ferron doesn't define and wrap life, but tells living stories.

There is some pain on this record, but laced with the assurance of change.

I fear I may have already said too much. Here is something Don Mclean said: "If something makes you feel a certain way, then there is no reason to analyze it--to decide why. The problem is that people are never satisfied until they've destroyed whatever magic they found in the first place. And I believe in magic."

Here is a drop of magic that is printed on the album's cover: "For love found there is a reason, for loved missed there is a reason still.

"We are here to become our wildest dreams. For some, that means simply to become beyond our wildest fears."

Shadows on a Dime can be found at A Woman's Place Bookstore and Buck Dancers Choice in Calgary.

AHA! SO THAT'S A FEMINIST CLICK! Photo by Janice Michaud

For your information

There are free pamphlets available that you should take advantage of:

The Shocking Pink Paper, put out by the Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women, is published before every federal election and lists the questions you should ask your candidate on issues that the Council considers important to women. Along with each question is background information on the issue, as well as the type of response the Council sees as being supportive of women. For a free copy, write to:

The Cdn. Advisory Council on the Status of Women,
66 Slater Street, 18th Floor,
Ottawa, Ontario K1P 5R5

Play From Strength, by Penney Kome, is a step-by-step guide to initiating action recommended by the National Action Committee on the Status of Women. This booklet gives instructions on what to do when you become involved in an issue, how to identify allies, how to figure out where the jurisdiction lies, how to present a brief, and how to make your opinion count. Write to:

National Action Committee
on the Status of Women,
40 St. Clair Ave. East,
Suite 306,
Toronto, Ontario
M4T 1M9

The government now has a great subsidy program for women who wish to receive training in non-traditional jobs such as drafting and engineering. The government will pay your employer 75% of your wages while you receive this training, up to $250. a week, and for one to two years, depending on the occupation. For more information, contact Manpower or write to:

Publications Canada
Dept. RYA, Box 1986,
Station "B",
Ottawa, Ontario
K1P 6T6

UPCOMING

On Wednesday, April 18th, the Noon Hour Film Series on Women continues with "Weaving Our Lives", a film about women in South Africa and their art. This film is sponsored by the YWCA Committee for Development, the Calgary Women's Resource Centre and the Arusha Centre. It's to be shown at the YWCA. For more details, such as the room number, phone 263-1550.

Take back the power --

Subscribe to Webspinner

Sexist slant of ad ignites controversy

Windsor, Ont. (CP) - A newspaper ad placed by a lighting store only served to light up the store's telephone with calls from women who took a dim view of its choice of words.

Rick Webber, who placed the ad for the Windsor Electric and Fireplace Gallery, was overwhelmed and embarrassed by callers complaining of the sexist tone of the ad.

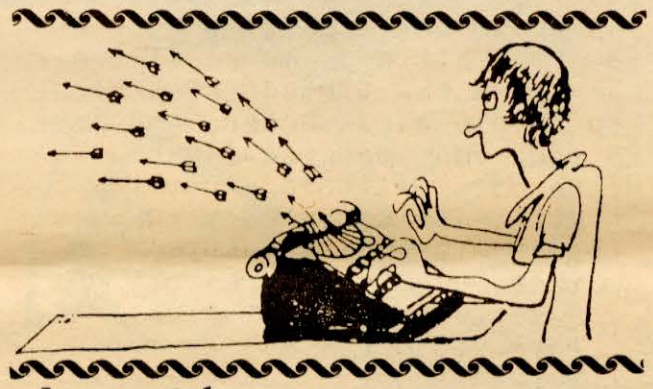
In part, the ad read:

"A Woman's Place Is In The Kitchen! Well, we know that's not always true, but in any event, many women spend their lives slaving in the kitchen...Now is the time to shed some light on the work the little woman does in the kitchen.

"So fellas, let's respond to the challenge our women have given us. Let's light up their lives...and who knows, maybe the food will improve too."

By 5 p.m. that day the telephone started ringing at the store. The staff stopped answering at 6 p.m. but it kept on ringing during an hour-long staff meeting.

So concerned was Webber that he ran an apology in the paper.



Another Sexist Ad

Here is an ad that ran in The Calgary Herald classified section on April 6:

"WANTED! A WIFE...to tell her husband about our well established fast growing company. For a minimum investment of $8,725 our dealers receive complete marketing support... no previous experience...training provided...If you are interested in a business with a dramatic profit result, send replies to:

Box H-0924, Calgary Herald
215-16th St. N.E., Calgary
T2E 7P5
THIS IS NOT A VENDING
MACHINE BUSINESS"

This ad makes me wonder what the reaction would be if it said something like, "Wanted! Black People...to tell the white folks they clean houses for to invest in our business." Why is one type of ad socially acceptable, even "cute" and the other type seen as unacceptable, outrageous, unthinkable? I think we should let this "fast-growing company" know that this ad and these attitudes are not acceptable.

ASWAC reflections

"Harvest Dance" by Em Lachance, Morel

By Julie Walker

I am fairly new to the women's community in Alberta, but I am somewhat familiar with the women's groups in Calgary. A situation I have seen again and again is when a group is dealing with a patriarchal structure within a matriarchal philosophy. Being raised in a men's society, structure and communication are often not of our own making. I have seen segregation and aggression occur within and between groups involved in many different areas of social change. The Alberta Status of Women Action Committee (ASWAC) is the first group I have met that is incredibly aware of these problems and is working at growing away from our social conditioning in our behaviour, our methods of decision-making and social/political change.

Part of the beauty of ASWAC is her flexibility. As soon as it is possible to narrowly define a group as being a particular thing, as having a function of this or that, as far as structure goes, it is easy to become lost in the "corporate structure" where any action that steps over a line or goes against an unspoken rule, or perhaps is not understood, becomes a bad thing or an impossibility. And these problems in communication lead to further segregation of people.

You see, we all know that women's ways are not the same as men's. But we have been raised in a society that is "thought out" by men for quite some time. The only way to break out of these patterns is to consciously evolve away from them, to learn, again, what feels right, what methods of communicating, organizing and working together or alone work best for us, you and me.

To evolve means to grow away from old rules and patterns and to create new ways of reaching our goals, of changing patterns and the way we work together. Evolving society's structure from within the structure is one way. It is my feeling that this route is the one of least bloodshed and that encourages a positive change.

I am amazed to discover that ASWAC is a group of very different women who are prepared to work (very hard and very successfully I might add) at changing their working structure. ASWAC is working at growing away from a traditionally structured group (ie. board, chairperson, etc.) to a group of women, all capable leaders, who have equal input and independence within the group. Not only that, it does not take three days to come to an agreement on something!

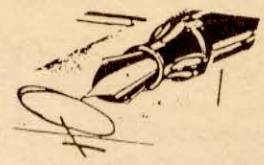
I attended the last stoard meeting in Calgary. At that meeting some technical and personal difficulties came up that related directly to how and what ASWAC does. I noted that there were no "cat fights", no grudges held and solutions were found. Within two hours, this group of women worked through the problems like salmon heading upstream. They were determined to work things out, to find solutions and to listen to other perspectives. It is not an easy process to put oneself through, because there is a strong chance of finding out that your own way does not work in that particular situation (ie. I'm wrong!).

The new ASWAC stoard (staff and board) has been together only six months and in that short time has dealt with crucial feelings about the direction of political decisions; that ASWAC has the option of being an active and responsive organization to women's needs. I have seen these women deal with personal feelings around the methods in which we respond to issues and the problems of communication that so often lead to the segregation and aggression within private an and volunteer organizations.

This structure has and is being tried and all groups which are honestly challenging the methods we (as women) have been spoonfed on deserve support and encouragement. It is difficult to deal with our political differences and our individual realities and still remain a unified, caring group of women. More power to you!

Love
Julie

Women and Media



By Meaghan Dean

ALBERTA WOMEN'S HERSTORY

The recording of Alberta women's herstory took another big step forward thanks to a Grande Prairie-based writing competition. The idea to seek submissions of short stories about Alberta women was conceived by Donna Tink, Northern Alberta representative to the Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women (CACSW), as part of the commemoration of CACSW's 10th anniversary.

Response to the competition has been copious and enthusiastic and now begins the difficult job of sifting through the submissions to decide which will get the $100 prize. Donna also hopes to publish all the submissions in an anthology of Alberta women.

POWER OF COMMUNICATION

The following excerpts were taken from an article by A. Lin Neumann called "Scandal in Manila", published in the February 1984 issue of Ms Magazine. The excerpts also appeared in the March-April issue of "Media Report to Women".

"This system of prostitution, especially the region-wide sex tours, has begun to draw fire from militant women networking in the Philippines, Japan and elsewhere. In 1981, Zenko Suzuki, Prime Minister of Japan, then on a good-will visit to the Philippines and Thailand, was confronted at several stops in Manila by women representing several church-related social justice organizations. 'Your good intention of projecting an image of friendly Japan is being destroyed by the Japanese male tourists who invade Asia in organized sex tours and degrade our women shamelessly,' said the women in an open letter to Suzuki signed by 46 organizations. Thai women mounted a similar campaign.

"The women's efforts were coordinated with the Asian Women's Association, based in Japan. The association has been lobbying for an end to the tours since 1973 when a Korean woman's group, now banned by the martial law government there, organized the first protests against the system. Women are finding one another in regional conferences and through journals such as 'Asian Women's Liberation', the newsletter of the Japanese feminists.

"The networks of women in the Philippines have become increasingly vocal following the protests lodged against the Suzuki visit. The Third World Movement Against Exploitation of Women (TWMAEW), headquartered in Manila, hopes to become a region-wide coordinating body. A Filipina nun, Sister Soledad 'Sol' Perpinan, is credited with forming TWMAEW, whose aim is to be an 'action-oriented, networking Women's Movement'."

CULTURE EXCLUDES WOMEN

"Canadians spend more per capita on books than people in any other country...eighty percent of the people in Canada who buy books are women.... Strangley, this information about the market is not reflected in the content of book sections of Canadian newspapers or in reviews and articles in general circulation or literary magazines....Neither is the investment Canadian women make annually in books reflected in government cultural policies or agency support of feminist presses or women writers...."

This is a quote from the report of Sharon H. Nelson on "Women and Writing in Canada", reprinted from "Fireweed, A Feminist Quarterly", Issue 15, Winter 1982, based on research by herself, Sharon Batt, Julie Bruck, Lee Courtois and Sandra Lambert ("Fireweed" articles are copyrighted in name of the authors). The report is a detailed examination and critique of the structures by which male control of culture in Canada excludes women.

"A disproportionate number of academics are involved in editing and publishing of literature in Canada....Academics have an unusually large amount of time to devote to writing, editing, publishing, and reviewing. In addition, for many academics writing is part of the job....It is the job of academics to be actively involved in ideological structures and to distrubute ideology....

"In 1980-81, only eleven percent of tenured academics in all disciplines were women... only 12.5 percent of teachers in university writing programs were women....

"The exclusion of women from the mainstream of academic life and the under-representing of women in universities...is reflected in the literary milieu. Women are rarely integrated into the power structures of publishing firms, magazines, and universities. Because women are not present in any number, it is perceived as 'natural' that women should not be present....

"[T]he Canada Council, by ...its dependence on academic writers and letters of reference from 'credible' (academically recognized) sources, is involved in maintaining and reinforcing the status and control held by members of invisible colleges and in the promotion of a system of personal sponsorship. The exclusion of women from this system is obvious from Canada Council statistics....

"For instance...[f]or the years 1978-1979 and 1970-1980, only 20 percent of project cost funding went to books by female authors....[T]wenty-three percent of translations published with Canada Council support were of books written by women and twenty-eight translators were women. In fiscal 1979-1980, five translations were commissioned by the council. All five were of books written by men....

"We are treated to the spectacle of a Canada-Council-supported, academically-based literary publishing industry which fails repeatedly to take cognizance of its natural market. The result is not only the elevation of the mediocre, the exclusion of women, and the maintenance of the status quo and the chronic need for further infusions of public money, but a form of social and political control associated in the minds of most Canadians with totalitarian political regimes. Indeed, the invisible college is totalitarian and the result is suppression, oppression, propaganda and the elimination of dissent. This is accomplished simply by censorship and it is directed most often at women's writing...."

"Fireweed, A Feminist Quarterly" is a journal of independent feminist thought on politics and art, includes, poetry, fiction, visual art, essays, reviews and visions, and encourages submissions from women of color, lesbians, and working class women. It is available for $10 per year of four issues ($12 outside Canada, $17 institutions) from "Fireweed", P.O. Box 279, Station B, Toronto, Ont. M5T 2W2.

Excerpts of the "Fireweed" article for this column were taken from "Media Report to Women", a bi-monthly publication from the Women's Institute for Freedom of the Press. $20 one-year subscription, $15 special rate for individual women paying by personal cheque. 3306 Ross Place, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20008.

HEATHER BISHOP SINGS FOR ALL

By Janice Michaud

Music is widely known as a language that cuts through racial, age and class structures so that listeners become one as they listen to the melodies and lyrics.

Former Saskatchewan native Heather Bishop, singer and song-writer for some 10 years, does cut through all barriers when she belts out a blues number in a Billie Holiday vein or when she caresses the ear with a gentle ballad in a style akin only to her. Whatever the musical idiom, Bishop, now a Manitoba resident, tends to slice barriers in half and soothe that special place in all of us.

Billed at the 1983 Calgary Women's Summer Festival as a Canadian blues singer, Bishop corrected the erroneous and limiting introduction, stating instead that her music, which comes mainly from her own living experience,was music for and about people - people of all kinds.

In an interview prior to her Calgary concert, Bishop and I spoke in the open air at Princess Island about her latest album, her future, her influences and, in general, life. While the festival continued on around us, Bishop and I sat down on a picnic table and engaged in some lively conversation.

I am curious, I tell her, about her latest album **I Love Women...Who Laugh** after becoming hooked by her previous releases, especially **Celebration** . In her usual animated way, Bishop describes this new release.

It's basically an accurate summation of her people-oriented politics. Whether singing about the love of a woman she is miles away from while touring across the country, **Next To You** , or singing about the joy of women celebrating women, **I Love Women** , or even singing about the destructive forces of nuclear armament, **The Holocaust** , Bishop's catching melodies and terse lyrics, are making her statement powerfully.

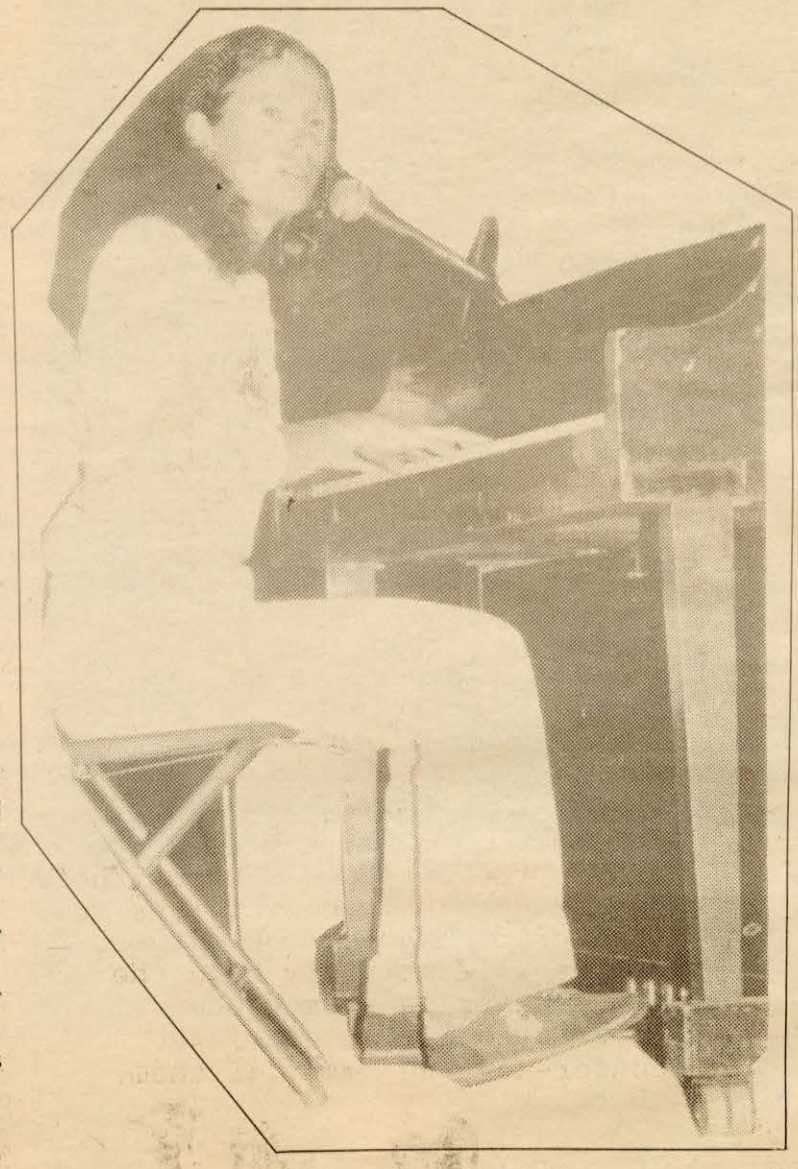
Since issuing her debut album in 1980, **Grandmother's Song** , Bishop believes her music has expanded in style and scope.

"My new album shows a lot of growth...a lot of maturity," she reflects.

The quality, she continues, is good as is the content which includes songs about racism, anti-nuke protests, and women loving women. And, "Yes", Bishop adds, "My music continues to be political."

It was a blistering hot day that July and the sun became too strong for both us. Heather spotted some shade along the banks of the Bow River, so we moved a few hundred yards. The interivew continued.

As a singer/song-writer, Bishop thinks of many influences but saw "Nina Simone as my first and biggest influence. Other musical direction was derived from



the legendary greats, Bessie Smith, Billie Holliday and Ma Rainey.

Bishop is a regular performer at many different types of festivals throughout North America regularly. She has found that her following is diversified - women, children and men.

Her album **Belly Button** ,released by Mother of Pearl Records in 1982, attests to her strong commitment and interest in children.

Photos by Janice Michaud

Bishop's feelings reinforced mine because I had long felt that children were quite intelligent little beings who, because of age and size, were not taken seriously. I was excited when she elaborated.

"I've been working with kids for years. I get quite incensed with records that play down to children," commenting on the lack of refined children's music and recordings.

Bishop feels that children's music should "also be palatable to most moms and dads" since children tend to play a record over and over again. The record "should be something parents would enjoy as well. I think **Belly Button** is a good children's record that has lightness" and all the other ingredients kids love.

Perhaps unusual to myself and other fans, but not unusual to Bishop, is her large male following that also listens to her intense, poignant love songs.

"A great deal of my audience consists of men. Men have been changing a great deal" she winks,and are she says, eager to hear love songs sung by a woman to other women.

"Straight men (can) really identify with that tenderness instead of hearing (a lot) about the macho image" on modern rock. In fact, she says, her music offers such an emotional appeal that some of these men are able to respond to women with tender emotions.

Being a staunch Canadian, I again became curious about being a female in the predominantly male Canadian music industry.

"I'm really big on Canada...And being a woman is (what I thought) still pretty tough in the music industry." Cautiously she adds that's changing when she looks at the numbers of women in music now.

"Women writing about women are some of our real leaders today." Those with feminist politics like Bishop's receive even more praise from this slender women.

While on the topic of women, Bishop had comments to make on the Calgary Summer Women's Festival.

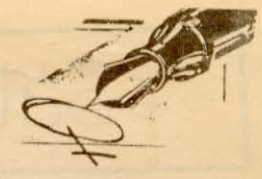
"It's a very ambitious project to try and put on a women's festival. It's going to take years for it to catch on. Folk festivals have been around for years and they are just starting to gain credibility."

Bishop plans on continuing her public appearances in other parts of Canada and especially the United States, as well as recording more and more. She's even considered recording several female artists, and would love to, but hesitates because producing "is such a nickle and dime business" in Canada.

For the time being, fans can expect to hear more of Bishop and, when she says it's time to change the game, fans will enjoy much, much more of her art work (Bishop now does her own album covers).

"I was an artist first before I became involved in music. When I am an older lady," Bishop says she will retire and resume art. Until then, the Canadian music industry will surely hear more from her.

'88 INTERNATIONAL FEMINIST FORUM



By Suzn Morgan

I had a dream one day last summer--a day dream you might say--and I want to share it with you.

My dream is a dream of women from all over the world meeting together and celebrating the wonder of our strength, our sameness and our diversity.

In my home I have a small poster on my wall and it says:

> See the unimagined
> strength in women
> See the dream and
> fight for it.

A thousand times these words have encouraged me and spurred me on to taking more chances in my life.

For me "see the dream and fight for it" translates directly into changing an ethereal image into a here and now reality. And the fighting is in fighting the fear I feel at leaping that incredible chasm between thought and action.

Your hearing about this now is because of an incredible act of bravery on my part. I wrote down the images of my dream and sent them out into the world...with great trepidation, feeling that perhaps my child-dream might be trampled or ridiculed.

I say my child-dream because she is no longer the newly born that was so fragile that I felt I needed to protect her from any drafts of critical examination.

During the last year I have been doing an increasing amount of international feminist networking. Last summer I was corresponding with some women in Sweden who were sponsoring the International Feminist Congress on Incest. The issues we were working on were the same and our need for shared information was similar. And so an idea began to grow.

I spent months working out the concept in my mind and it kept growing and growing. After about four months of internal incubation I chose a few friends to share it with. I was afraid that my idea would be laughed at--something like the ant who thought she could move a mountain.

Well, no one laughed. My friends encouraged and questioned and the child grew stronger with the new input. And so...now she has taken her first step...

1988
INTERNATIONAL FEMINIST FORUM

She is a channel to increase international cohesiveness among women; to help break the silence on our issues that is intensified by our social and geographical distances by creating a forum for women to communicate with women from a feminist analysis. And through this to provide a sharing of our global women's culture.

I view this particular concept of promoting feminism as being open to the use of an extensive multi-media approach. Extensive networking to reach women throughout the world can be facilitated by current available resources. Thus, the idea of using the 1988 Winter Olympics, being held in Calgary, came about. A formal connection with the Olympic Association is not necessary to take advantage of the international interest that will focus on Calgary at this time. Given four years, in which they/we can do advance planning and fundraising, there is room for creative growth in this process.

Canadian women can provide organizational structure and the physical cooridination required for such an event. Women from around the world will bring their issues and their conferences to the forum. Women from diverse places will not only have the opportunity to attend one international women's issue conference, but many of them.

The International Feminist Forum on Incest has already expressed interest in being a part of the forum.

This is an unprecedented opportunity for women and a fine way for Canada to follow up on its commitment to women, extending from the World Plan of Action (a United Nations Project),that calls for governments' continued support and development of the status of women on a medium and long range basis. As the Decade for Women (1975-1985) draws to a close, this forum is a way for Canada to pledge its continued support.

International Feminist Forum is a multi-issue, non-partisan organization committed to changing the over-all status of women through personal contact and information sharing.

So...this is my child-dream and she's outgrown my single ability to nuture and guide her. I am in search of other women with energy and stamina to help direct this sometimes unruly child.

Why During Olympics?

I have been asked, why during the Olympics? Why during that time of incredible action and distraction? A quote from the National Action Committee on the Status of Women says it very well:
"In many parts of the world women face extreme hostility toward change. For these women, political action is much more circumscribed. The fact that it does not assume the characteristics of feminist action elsewhere is not an indication of the disunity among women, but of the different conditions under which we live, of the lack of freedom to acknowledge or express opposition to subjection." And so a forum designed with the possibility of connecting with women from diverse and subjugated backgrounds may reach some of our sisters who want to learn but who are entrapped in a cultural silence.

> *"Women are the only discriminated against group that will never have a country, which is good because it makes us anti-nationalist. So we need either a consciousness raising group or a rap group or a network or a quilting bee where we can say, 'God, here's what happened to me.' It's like having a psychic country."*
>
> *--Gloria Steinem--*

Lots of interest has bee expressed by women in Alberta and internationally. A few Calgary women are enthusiastic supporters but more concerned women are needed in Calgary to form a board to help discuss and direct this project. I know that thinking about being part of a project as large and as diverse as International Feminist Forum is very threatening. Many women have expressed fear that they do not have the experience or the skill to be part of directing this event. I believe that by working together we will discover we do have the skills and we will have the experience as we grow. I know there are women out there who are willing to challenge their boundaries. Feminist forum is a safe place to learn and grow and reach out to other women. So, "see the unimagined strength in women--see the unimagined strength in yourself".

Want to be a co-mother--call Suzn 246-8755.

> *"People have to accept the responsibility of standing up for what they care about."*
>
> *--Maria Erikson--*

Satirically Yours

The following is an article from Herizons, a monthly publication of the Manitoba Status of Women.

* * *

By Lyn Cockburn

"Why", asks my dinner companion, "are women protesting against porn movies instead of putting their energy into convincing other women who are doing it. If women refused to act in skin flicks, there wouldn't be a problem."

"You're right," I tell him. "That's exactly the point I used to make with my Indian acquaintances when they complained about movies which portrayed native people as scalp-happy savages. I pointed out that they wouldn't have a problem if they just convinced other Indians not to participate."

Some people don't seem to appreciate supportive comments. My dinner companion frowned at me and changed the subject.

"Those protesters are inconsistent," says the man in the elevator. "They say they're against so-called sexual exploitation, yet there's all sorts of violence on t.v. which they blithely ignore. If they really want to do some good, they ought to be working to remove shootings, beatings and other needless violence from our screens."

"It's because women are so self-centred," I explain in sympathetic tones. "We're always trying to improve living conditions for women instead of concentrating on more worthwhile causes. In Marx's time, there were women who tried to tell him that improving the lot of women was as important as getting on with the revolution. The suffragettes ignored world wide poverty just to agitate for the vote for women. In the sixties, many women crusaded for equal opportunities instead of worrying about the Vietnam War. And now, when there are so many important causes to pick from, environmental issues, El Salvador, unemployment and nuclear arms, many women insist on choosing porn as an issue. We traditionally have a lot of trouble understanding that every other cause is more important than ours."

The man on the elevator didn't like being agreed with either. He got of at the next floor, muttering.

"Look at those prudes parading about with their silly signs," says the man with whom I am watching the 6 o'clock news. "They say they're against exploitation. The truth is they just don't like sex."

"Well, they may be prudes," I answer. "But I'm not. I think it's exciting to see all those naked or half clothed women and all those clothed men. It's titillating that the men are so powerful, strong and menacing while the women are submissive or frightened. It gives me a warm feeling all over to see men doing such innovative things to women. Hard core stuff is particularly fun. Rape is a turn on and snuff movies are sexy for sure."

He didn't want my support either and refused to stay for dinner.

"Censorship," says the man in the laundromat, "is dangerous. When we start telling people what they can watch in the privacy of their own homes, we're endangering democracy."

"I know how you feel," I tell him, "because I'm sure my rights have already been infringed upon. I used to enjoy all those marvellous movies which showed blacks as simple children, Jews as money hungry scavengers and Puerto Ricans as criminals. They gave me a healthy outlet for my fantasies, but they've almost disappeared from the screen, even after midnight. My democratic right to view other races as inferior is gone and, if you're not careful, your right to view women as playthings will be lost."

I was a little hurt that he refused to continue the conversation and moved down to the other end of the laundromat.

"Degrading to women? What nonesense! Most porn is just good fun," says the man in the next apartment.

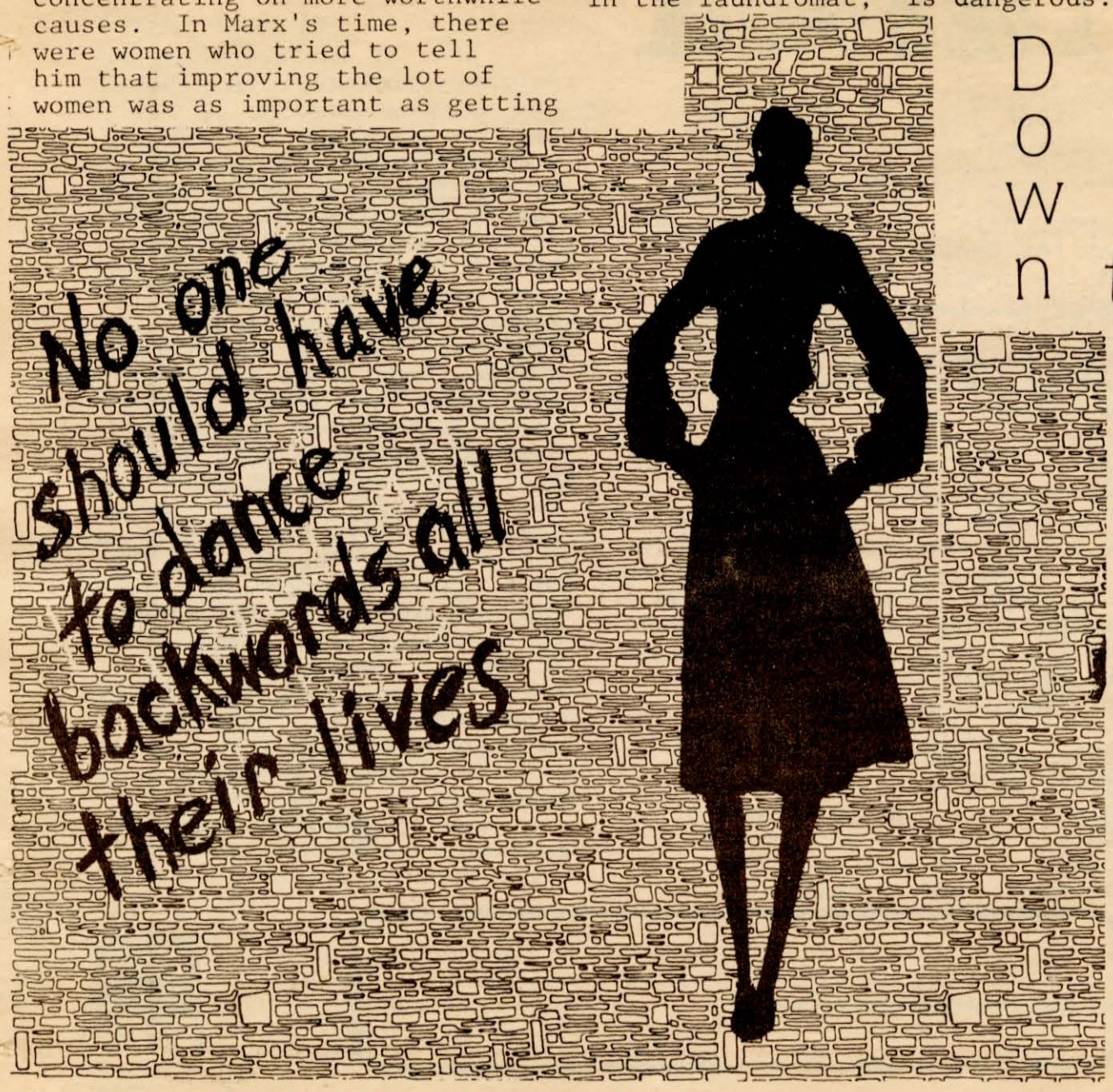
"It certainly is," I agree. "The problem is that we allow women to decide what is degrading to them. Look what happened when we permitted the elderly to speak up. Carol Burnett used to do all those wonderful skits which showed old people as bumbling idiots, but she made the mistake of listening to the Grey Minority and those great skits are no more."

The man in the next apartment reacted badly to my support. He now refuses to speak to me in the hallway.

"There's nothing wrong with a few bare breasts and bums on the late night t.v.," grumbles the man in the grocery store. "Absolutely nothing," I nod in agreement, "and a few bare penises wouldn't hurt either."

"You're disgusting," he says, turning his back on me.

It's amazing how agreement, sympathy and support do not win friends.



Down town Rules

By Pamela Perdue

Torn suede jacket and
beat-up jeans
observe the noon ritual. I see
briefcases on suit-jacketed arms
swinging in wide arcs;
open flapping trenchcoats,
gesticulating hands. Their
steps
are sure, for the sidewalk is
theirs.
I see
downcast eyes in tinted faces,
conceding the pedestrian
right-of-way.
Hesitant steps in four-inch
spikes,
uncertain and comically
bent at the knees,
an entire gender
forgotten how to walk.
I lift my face to meet the wind,
lengthening my strides until I
break the downtown rules.

NDP women commend doctors

The Alberta New Democratic Party (NDP) Women's Section has released a letter of support commending pro-choice doctors and health professionals supportive of women's health.

The statement followed "upon reflection of International Women's Day" and says:

"We the undersigned are writing in support of those doctors and health professionals who demonstrate through their actions that they support a woman's right to decide whether or not to bear children.

"Anti-choice activist groups have become so vocal recently that it must be difficult to realize that there are many who support a woman's freedom of choice. We feel that the right to make the choice must be a personal decision based on an individual's life situation and beliefs.

"We would therefore like to be helpful in whatever way possible in support of both a woman's right of choice as well as a doctor's right to exercise her/his clinical judgement in consultation with the client. We realize that such decisions are serious ones."

The statement also commends the doctors and health professionals "for their endeavours and integrity in this area".

Woman comes through

By Julie Walker

Margaret Birrell, is a candidate for the NDP Party in B.C. She believes that the party has a "they" all its own. She is on her way to confront the problems with her competitors' platforms by sharply reversing the NDP's method of operating as an "electoral machine" that talks about the original policy initiatives of the grass-roots, then runs out of steam somewhere short of victory. "We've lost three elections with that strategy," Margaret observed. She knows that to win an election--even to win support in the party ranks--the NDP has to go back to its roots as a social and political movement.

Margaret Birrell points out the problems that our society is being faced with in the current technological revolution. "The jobs that are going are not going to be coming back," she commented. She sees the NDP as being more supportive of the people of today that are losing out in their jobs. "Obviously, the economy is the number one issue and what we are saying is that we would be more benevolent masters of the existing system."

At last an honest politician who recognizes the root of the problems today and not merely recommends cures for the symptoms.

Equal pay - - at last?

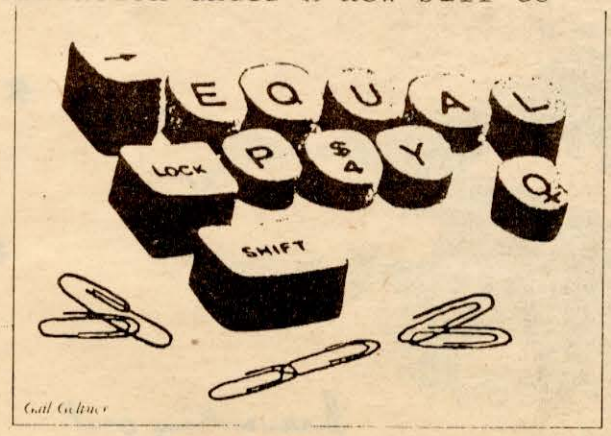
After more than 20 years of legislation, women may finally have won their most important victory since Title Vll of the Civil Rights Act expressly outlawed sex discrimination. Last December a federal judge ordered the Washington state government to fork over almost a billion dollars in back pay to women workers who had been systematically underpaid.

Though it has been illegal to pay women less than men for the same work since the 1983 Eaqul Pay Act, as of 1982 women working full time still earned an average of 62 cents for every dollar paid to men. One problem in redressing the inequity has been that, by and large, men and women do different work: certain types of jobs (secretary, nurse, libraian) are almost exclusivle "pink collar" ghetto work, while others (janitor, driver, electrician) are usually done by men. Thus, objective wage comparisons have been difficult, a matter of aples and oranges - that is, until the introduction of the comparable worth concept, which goes beyond equak pay for equal work to the same pay for different jobs of a comparable value.

The Washingtcn stat suit was the biggest comparable worth claim since the 1981 Supreme Court ruling legitimized the formula. It also yeilded by far the most sweeping settlement: Judge Jack E. Tanner ordered the state to pay its women workers a whopping $80 $800 million to $1 billion to compensate for its "direct, discrimination." He based his ruling, in part, on a job evaluation stude by an outside consulting firm.

Ironically, the state had supplied the evidence of its own guilt. As far back as 1974 state governmen, prodded by the Washington Federation of State employees, had begun commissioning detailed evaluations of its job classifications. By devising a point system for such factors as qualifications, skill, and responsibility, the outside consultants were able to assign comparable values to jobs as different as librarian and electrition, secretary and forklift operator. When the points were added up, the lag in women's wages became apparent. And the state acknowledged the gap by attempting, on several occasions to legislate corrective action.

By 1981, though, the union had decided that the state's good intentions were too little, too late, and it went to court with the government's own studies as evidence. Even as the state legislature was considering a $15 million authorization under a new bill to bring women's wages up to parity by 1993, Judge Tanner ordered more substantial and more immediate actions. As he remarked to the Wall Street Journal, "I can't find any case where, once discrimination is found, you can take ten years to correct it."



Tanner has also called for new pay formulas which will raise women's wages by 31 percent.

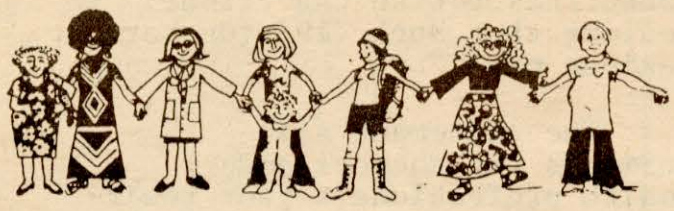
State officials have warned that such a large settlement could have a "devastating" impact of the state's economy. But Winn Newman, attorney for the women emplyees, insists that any claim of financial hardship is "irrelevant". The state took maney that didn't belong to it by paying women less. It's like robbing a bank and then saying you can't afford to pay back the money."

Both Gov. John Spellman and state attorneys say they plan to appeal the decision; the case may go as far as the Supreme Court. If upheld, the ruling "could break the back of sex-based wage discrimination", claims Newman, because it affects "virtually all" public and private employers.

By some estimate, it could cost employers across the country $150 billion a year to raise women workers to the same wage levels as men who do work of comparable worth. After twenty years on the books, the Equal Pay Act may actually acquire some bite.

Lee Aitken, from;
New Age Journal
March 1984

WOMEN GATHER ROUND



Let's gather all the women round
To learn of their past
Discover their present
And plan their future.

For we were born naked
Then were taught
To clothe ourselves with
servitude
And not speak out.

We were brought up to serve man
Not to question why
To be gentle, soft-spoken, no
wordly ambition
To obey the church, give birth,
and die.

Let's gather all the women round
To talk, to think, to act
It's time, right now, to take a
stand
Women, let's FIGHT BACK.

I wrote this poem after a day of conversations at work. My job for the day was a menial task of cleaning heads and pincher rollers on tape recorders so it allowed for great thought and attention to the greater things in life - discovering oneself. What really triggered it was the last conversation, of which I tried to keep an open mind and closed mouth, that concluded in the statement "boy babies and girl babies are born different and will always play different roles because of their genetic traits. Now I totally disagree with this statement. I think the difference is social - right from birth - how babies are treated by their environment, but I don't have any facts to support my argument (at this time) so I let the conversation end peacefully and the poem grew out of it.

It is my first women's poem. I have had ideas since I read my first Webspinner but they have been washed away by time and circumstance. This one was clear and I got it down fast. My work comrade liked it and suggested we send it to Webspinner because of its gut-level.

Books in Canada

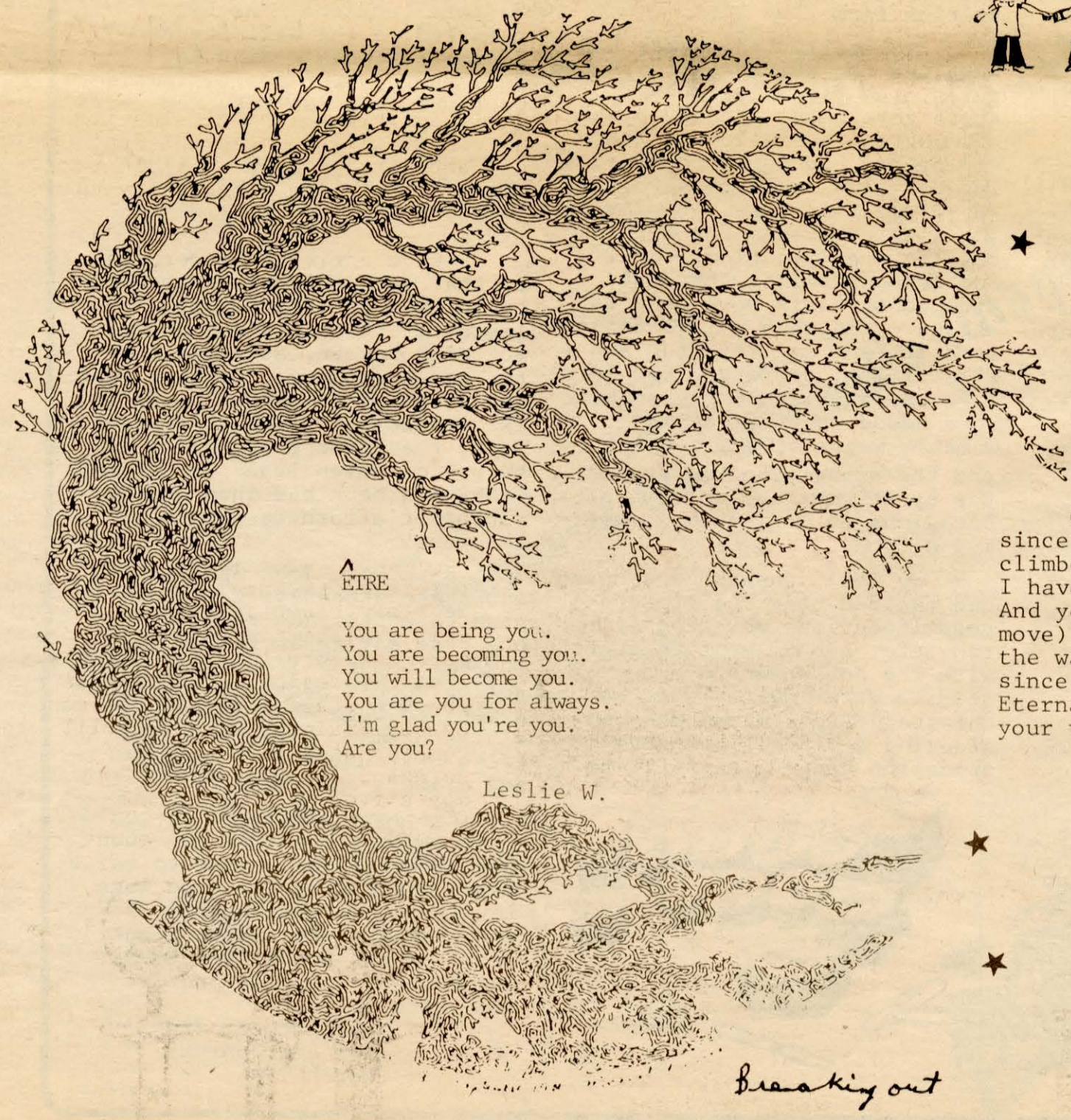
It's not a perfect poem, none of mine are (I've been composing a long time but most are love poems stashed away in the far reaches of my trunk - typically Piscean and subjective content).

And who am I? A 35-year-young woman with three motorcycles to support, love and maintain, a male friend in the background who gives me support even though I fight with him with my "new" ideas and lastly, a job at the University of Alberta as an Audio Visual Technician, which allows me eventually to learn a trade in electronics.

I give Webspinner my love and support to grow stronger.

Pat Laing

Books in Canada



ETRE

You are being you.
You are becoming you.
You will become you.
You are you for always.
I'm glad you're you.
Are you?

Leslie W.

Great things have happened since I met you. (I have climbed a proverbial mountain. I have forged many a stream. And yes I did feel the earth move). Nothing compared to the warmth I feel in my being since I have known you. Eternally grateful I am for your very existence.

Elizabeth

Breaking out

NOW THAT'S ENTERTAINMENT

By Pamela Perdue

Until just recently I was pretty disgusted with prime-time t.v. Take a look at almost every new "action" show that came out at the beginning of last season and you'll see what I mean. Without exception, all the high-action, crime-fighting drama series featured men in all the primary roles, assuming I guess, that no women would be watching and therefore want any intelligent female characters to identify with.

I was amazed at the amount of these shows. There seems to be a trend towards series that feature strong, mostly Caucasian men with little or no emotions, an inability to feel physical pain, and an enthusiasm for violence. This violence is whitewashed with the excuse that the main characters are the "good guys" fighting for their principles.

These shows include Airwolf, The A-Team, Automan, Blue Thunder, Hardcastle and McCormick, Knight Rider, The Legmen, The Master, Matt Houston, Mickey Spillane's Mike Hammer, Simon and Simon, and T.J. Hooker. EAch one of these shows features women in secondary roles only, ranging from a fairly "bright" supportive co-worker, girlfriend or friend to the unabashedly dumb blonde "girl" who is weak, dependent, adoring and dressed to showcase her body. She too, is almost always Caucasian and under thirty. Some role models!

The A-Team was recently featured in People Magazine. The interviewer asked why the only female member of the team was being replaced. The producer replied that she was too much of a "tomboy" and demanded too many scenes of equal action with the men's. They've found a replacement for her, one the producer admitted fit their qualifications. "We're looking for more of a bimbo," he said.

All is not lost. We're finally getting some prime time shows with independent, intelligent women. All, of course, work outside the home, since Hollywood has yet to imagine a strong, independent, creative homemaker. "Cagney and Lacey" returns for seven episodes beginning March 19 and there are some new series all with women in the lead roles. "The Suzanne Pleshette Show" has a single, daily newspaper features writer living in New York. "Kate and Allie", also premiering March 19, has Jane Curtin and Susan Saint James as two divorced women with children sharing an apartment and pooling their resources. Loretta Swit has just starred in a pilot called "Cat and Mike", a police drama which teams her with a male partner. Then there's "Mama Malone", about a woman who tapes a cooking show in her Brooklyn apartment which she shares with her divorced daughter and grandson.

Maybe these shows, plus some realistic presentations of female characters in series like "The Four Seasons", "St. Elsewhere" and "Hill Street Blues" will provide a balance to the popular image of blonde fluffball sex kitten served up on prime time.

OUR TIME IS NOW

As the historical silence of women breaks down a great wealth of artistic and cultural expression is emerging. "Our Time is Now" is a festival to celebrate this process.

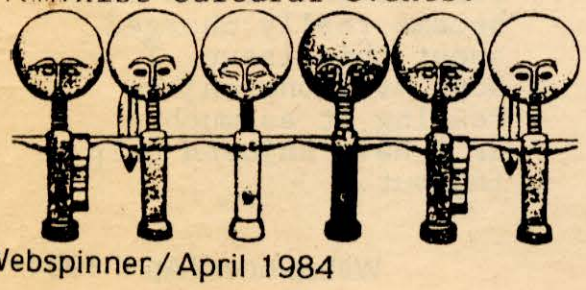
The Canadian Women's Music and Cultural Festival will be held in Kildonan Park in Winnipeg, September 1 and 2.

An event expected to draw more than 20 acts from across the country, the Festival will feature women performers from diverse regional and cultural backgrounds whose musical styles range from folk, rock, blues, and jazz to traditional. Art displays and children's entertainment also will be featured.

Main stage performances will be held in Rainbow Stage, a sheltered area with a seating capacity of about 2,400.

The theme of the Festival - Our Time is Now - refers to the great wealth of artistic and cultural expression emerging as women's voices start to be heard. Because it often deals with themes of particular concern to women, "Women's Music" has begun to develop a distinct identity of its own, similar to the way that cultural groups have established their own musical traditions.

The event is sponsored by SDB Manitoba, a non-profit organization that promotes feminist cultural events.



Folksinger Jennifer Berezan

Photo by Brenda Hemsing

For further information, contact:

Kris Anderson or Joan Miller
Festival organizers
(204) 786-1921
Our Time is Now
Cdn. Women's Music Festival
745 Westminster Ave.,
Winnipeg, Manitoba
R3G 1A5

FOLK FESTIVAL

The Regina Folk Festival, which will be held the 8th, 9th and 10th of June, will feature a woman's stage funded by the Secretary of State.

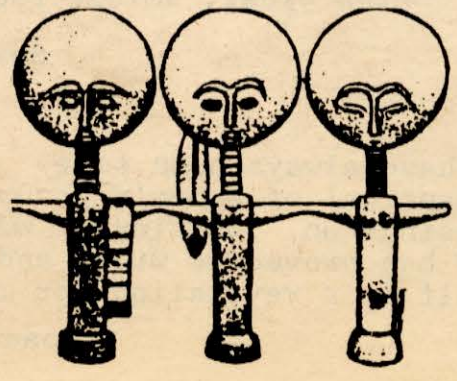
Jennifer Berezan, a Calgary singer/songwriter will be among the performers.

Jennifer, who did a concert in Lethbridge for International Women's Day in March, has been performing around Alberta for a couple of years now.

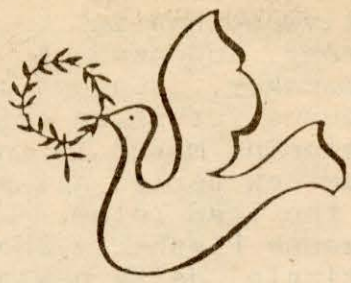
Jennifer sings of change-songs which urge nuclear disarmament, third-world liberation and the feminist movement.

She graces many women's events and fundraising benefits with her beautiful voice and guitar-playing, and is singing more and more of her own songs.

The Regina Folk Festival's Women's Stage will also feature dancer Elaine Bowman who will combine acts with Jennifer Berezan, Joan MacIsaac, Moon Joyce from the Yukon, and Heather Bishop.



Peace Fantasy



Dear Diana,

I've been wondering of late what "to do" about our discussion of peace and Voice of Women and then realized that I too felt most comfortable jotting my thoughts in the form of a letter. Also, I quit my job which I find makes things much more conducive to finding the time and energy for more peaceful pursuits...

Good grief--do you think that could be IT? Just get everyone to quit their jobs and VOILA global commitment to peace? I wonder what would happen if everyone in the world had nothing else pressing to do except think and talk and work on peace...

Wouldn't it be interesting if there were as many jobs, industries, governments, interest groups, soldiers, rituals, religions whose sole existence depended on the existence of peace as presently depend on war?

Think of it...whole "armies" "navies" and "air forces" of people whose sole headset, training and work was finding and nurturing peace. Not only would they be paid for such work, but be greatly honored and admired and wear beautiful uniforms of every color in the rainbow--and they would be an integral part of every important public occasion...

"Problem" children would go to highly respected Peace Schools where they would get a good healthy does of freedom, listening, hugs, caring, good food and all the time and space they need to do what they want. Make real men out of them...

And there would be the draft --into a kind of New Age Peace Corps, complete with bootcamp. Six weeks of rigorous, highly intensive training in the skills of non-violence where they would be expected to forget everything they've ever been taught about hate, violence, mistrust, nationalism, national security, enemy, right/wrong, them/us. And once loved and encouraged into basic shape they could go on and "specialize":

"Army"--to protect and love the land and teach this by example.

"Navy"--to protect and love the oceans. Find out what the dolphins and whales are saying--and teach this by example.

"Airforce"--protect and love the air we breathe--and to teach this by example.

And instead of border guards, border openers--then no borders at all. Instead of "intelligence agencies" dedicated to the preservation of lies, fear, secrecy, manipulation and death--what--everybody talking to everybody all at once about anything and everything--a marvellous, vibrant, life-loving shattering of all the silences...

The possibilities go on and on...

And eventually what would happen for those who still want war and hate and death? Well maybe they would be the ones who have to do the picketing: "We want death--we want war", "Give us a bruise--give us the cruise", "Arms are for killing", "Destroy the planet and everything on it". And they'd sing "We are hating, frightened people...". They would be the ones having to justify why they want to die...

And in this world though the warniks would not be met with violence--beatings, arrests, rape, ridicule, epithets, fearful uncomprehending hatred. No, they would be understood as the pained, damaged humans that they are. We would weep for their pain and we'd lovingly but firmly refuse to do to them what they wish upon us. We would always offer warm food and gentle talk...

And maybe eventually they'd get tired of trying to fend off all this gentleness around them. And gradually, one by one, the caring world would envelope them and they'd give up--find a soft, safe embrace and at last let themselves cry--howl out their pain. Cry and cry and cry until--as the last shuddering sobs subside--find peace...

love
Meaghan Dean

IN OUR OWN WORDS

The intensity I feel inside
escaping onto the paper.
Untouched talents
unfold, explode within
I reach to touch
sisters as yet unmet.
As the womyn here
reveal their lives
A safe space, created so
quickly
feeling, touching, growing
Challenging the fear within
Confronting the fear without
Being clear, amidst the chaos.

Suzn

I have always been somewhat skeptical of women's groups and their goings on. Working on Webspinner has proved me wrong and that in itself is a revelation for me!

Joanne G.

I work at a daily newspaper in Calgary, and the experience of working on Webspinner was so different that all I can say is that it has reafirmed by belief in and need for womynenergy.

Pamela

I look at my hands
and they are different
somehow. Once hesitant and awkward,
they have grown
to be apt and
strong.

Elizabeth

i wanna laugh and
cry together for the
beauty of our
creation - ourselves.
I've seen what i've
longed for, and now i'll
dream and live more

leslie c

I've waited nearly a year for Webspinner to come to Calgary. When it did this past weekend, it seemed like the wait was really quite short.

Our hurting - healing theme, running throughout, has been a tremendous time for me. This new year I had experienced my own pain, as we all do, and Webspinner gave me the outlet, moral support and encouragement to release it in written form. It is in this manner that the most effective change would come about for me, so I plunged into the task and wrote my pain and the pain I felt for family members.

Healing was also an intense feeling during this workshop and the closeness and warmth I have developed for the other Spider ladies is exhilerating.

by Janice

Finally, I shared one of my loves, newspapers, with my special and best friend Jo who also became really charged about this issue. I hope everyone enjoys reading it as much as I have enjoyed helping out.

I AM A WOMAN

I am a woman.
I am sitting tall on the cool
summer earth.
My hair blows long, wild, and
and split (as it is now)
in the wind among the stars
My arms reach out to both sides--
heavy at the top, tanned fore-
arms, thin wrists, thick
fingers, as they are now.
Hands outstretched.
My breasts swollen.
Full moon rising in the early
evening sky.
My trunk is short and thick.
My buttocks heavy and muscled.
My thighs spread apart. They
are heavy and strong, as they
are now.
Between my legs a mountain range,
then beyond, treed foothills
reaching to green plains as
far as I can see in the sun's
last light.
My calves are powerful, as now.
My feet stable and big as they
always have been.
Relaxed and strong I rest.
I remember.
I think.
I see.
This is my world.
My life.
I am a woman.
I am a big woman.
I hunger for life.
I long for pleasure.

I have a huge capacity to
create
to make songs.
to sing.
to dance.
to be part of the shaking
of the world.
My temper.
A thunderstorm blowing in as I
remember
how I learned to hate myself;
as I remember only yesterday
the fat woman in the window
display dressing the headless
inanimate, female manikin
in latest fashion.
Storm passes over me thunder
rolls into me.
My body tenses with the power.
I hold myself in the tension.
I press the earth with the
tension.
I see.
I finally see.
Other women with lands between
their thighs holding the earth.
I reach my hands to touch the
hands
of women reaching, touching.
We, who have been hated as we
have hated ourselves, we touch
each other.
I shake with the power.
I am strong in the tension.
We catch each other's gaze and
we laugh
Until we cry.
Until we cry no more.
But the earth, the earth we love
begins to tremble.

Kathleen Palm

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Working on Webspinner for the first time has definitely been a healing experience for me. It was all very different than what I had anticipated, much better than I ever dreamed. I'd like to thank all the other Spiderladies for providing me with a safe atmosphere in which to be creative. I really needed this. I hope that all those who have nurtured Webspinner and all those who join in along the way will benefit as much as I have.

Leslie W.

It is 11 p.m. Tuesday. This creation is to be ready for the printer by noon tomorrow. We've been working 12, 14 and 16-hour days for four days now. Twenty minutes ago we decided to go up to 28 pages from 24. I'm utterly pooped--my brain feels like mush...

And I'm sitting here--alternately typing and then draping over the typewriter--feeling so proud of us. Each of us, all of us, so tired and still so caring. And as I watch us and feel us pushing ourselves so gently here tonight, I realize how incredibly powerful our need to communicate what we need to say about our lives must be.

For me, this workshop in Calgary has been particularly important. It has been a year since the last Calgary workshop--one that was very painful for me. I've had a lot of time and put much energy into healing from that 1983 workshop, but I needed the strength and reassurance of this workshop to finish that healing process. To all the marvellous, diverse women here--thank you for helping me with this one.

How far Webspinner has come in just over a year. How far we've all come. I really do believe we're going to Do It--and I don't just mean putting out Webspinner...

Meaghan

Although I have known about and read Webspinner since last summer, I never appreciated the paper, the nature of the articles, until I became involved in the workshop in Calgary. Until I sat down with a group of women and discussed both the things that hurt and heal us, and became a part of the energy and voices of women that is Webspinner, I thought the paper was too much verbal discussion and not enough information.

I have written before but ever since an instructor at SAIT said I couldn't write I have been afraid of writing. What I realized at the workshop is that I can write, but that the hardcore journalism style was not my style. I felt too detached from what I was writing about and I was more worried about the rules of writing than my subject. I found myself so confined that it took me until now to discover my writing style.

The Webspinner workshop has been very much an eye-opener for me in many ways. I am very glad to be a part of this issue, and to realize the importance of a paper that fills the need Webspinner does.

Julie Walker

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Adoptors, donors...

Webspinner continues to receive donations and new mothers. She sends her love and gratitude to these women.

Dorcas Blair, Bowser, B.C.
-for a general donation

Shelagh Boutell, Calgary
-for adopting a typewriter

Spiderladies

This issue of Webspinner was put together in Calgary. Here are the women who risked, shared, sweated, laughed and cried through the process of the last five days of Webspinner.

Alda Blanes Brame
Charlotte
Leslie Churchill
Meaghan Dean
Elizabeth Dunbar
Joanne Gill
Janice Michaud
Suzn Morgan
Pamela Perdue
Julie Walker
Leslie Wilkins

A special thank you to Mary Wilkins (Leslie Wilkins' mother) who allowed us the use of her livingroom, kitchen and biffy for three days and who patiently and supportively endured the chaos, cigarette smoke and often late-night activity during Webspinner's layout stages.

Strengthen the web

Webspinner is produced during five-day workshops throughout Alberta. If your group would like to do an issue, contact WEBSPINNER at:
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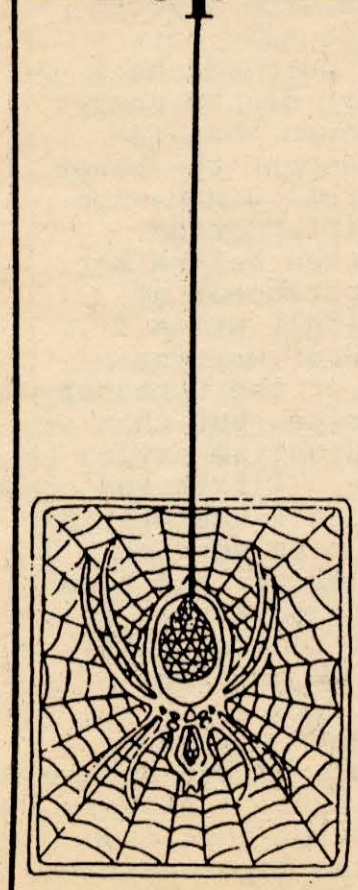

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